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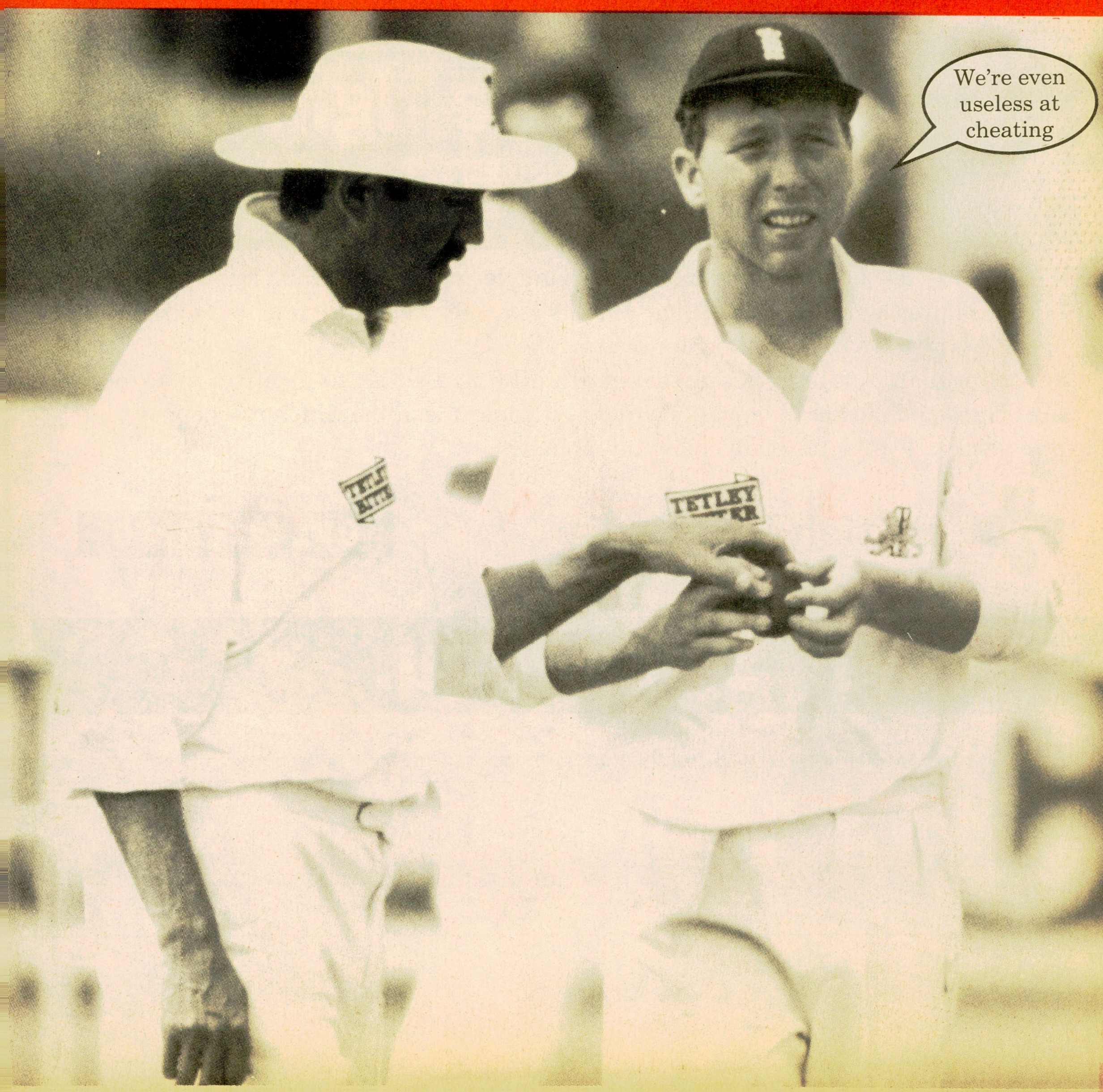

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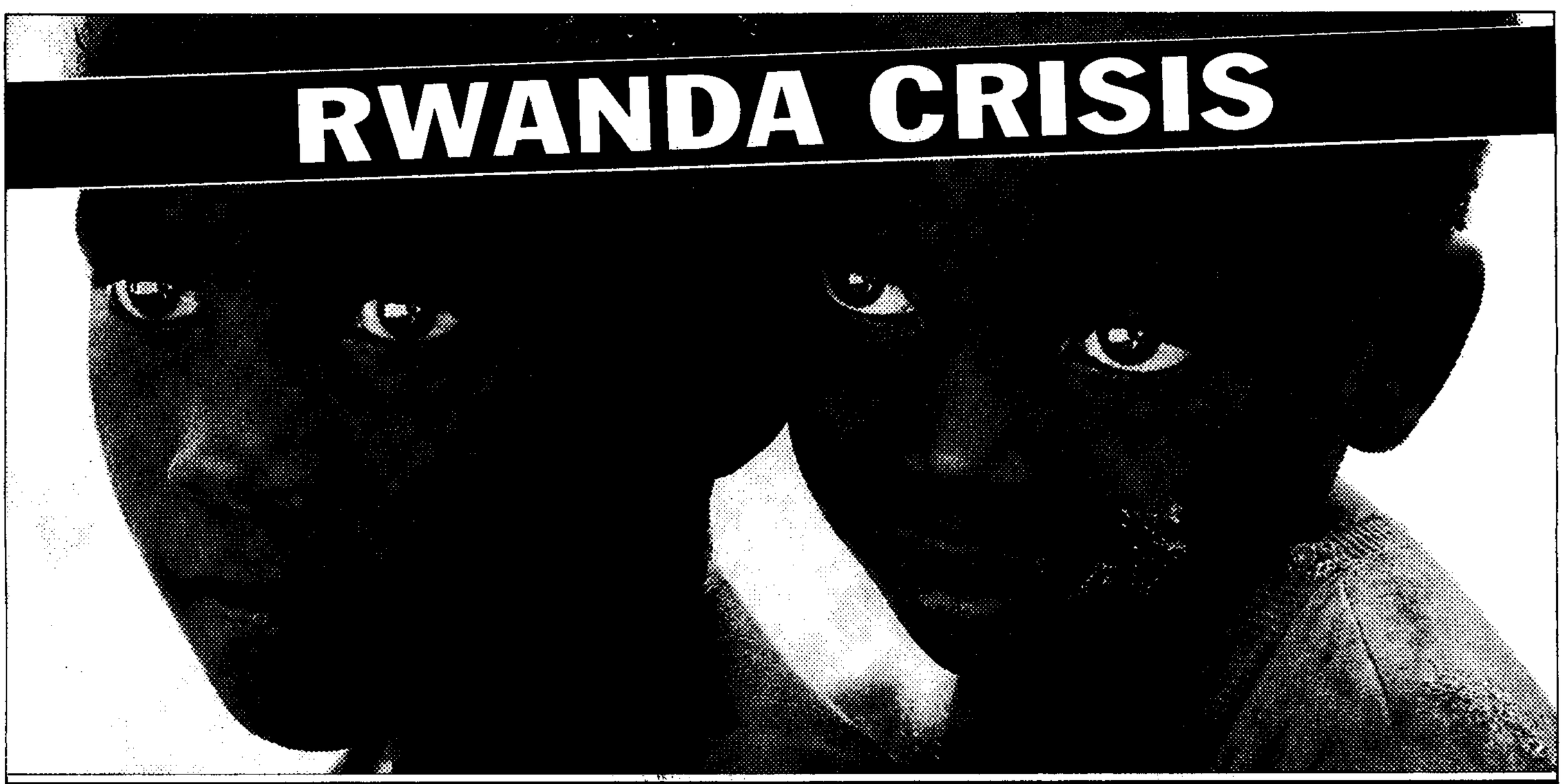

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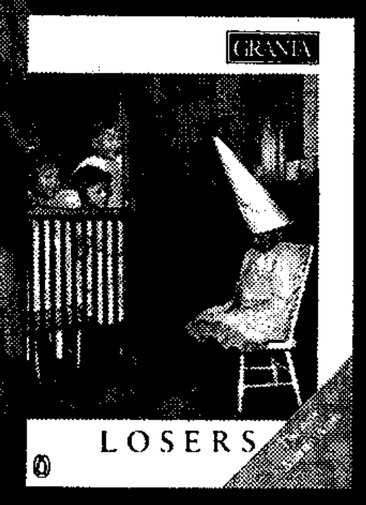
The reason you learned to read. GRANTA

by the age of forty everyone has the face they deserve.'

Martin Amis, Granta 17



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ADMIRAL

LLOYD'S LLOYD'S OF LONDON

Gnome

I must assure my readers that I did not take the decision lightly to pay Baby Abbie's kidnapper's boyfriend a very large amount of money for his story.

I was well aware that the paying of a huge wad of cash to the man who had helped this woman after her criminal abduction of a baby raised serious ethical points.

Indeed, the editor of my Sunday paper *The Scum of the World* and I were so concerned about being seen to be indulging in discreditable cheque-book journalism that we told the kidnapper's boyfriend that we would only publish his story on very strict conditions:

1. That he filled up at least 15 pages of the newspaper.

2. That he went into graphic detail about his sex-life.

3. That he provided lots of mawkish pictures so that people wouldn't think so badly of him.

4. That he provided all this stuff in time for us to "spoil" the real mother's story which a rival publication had got.

I think you will agree that I acted entirely within the traditional limits of British newspaper journalism.

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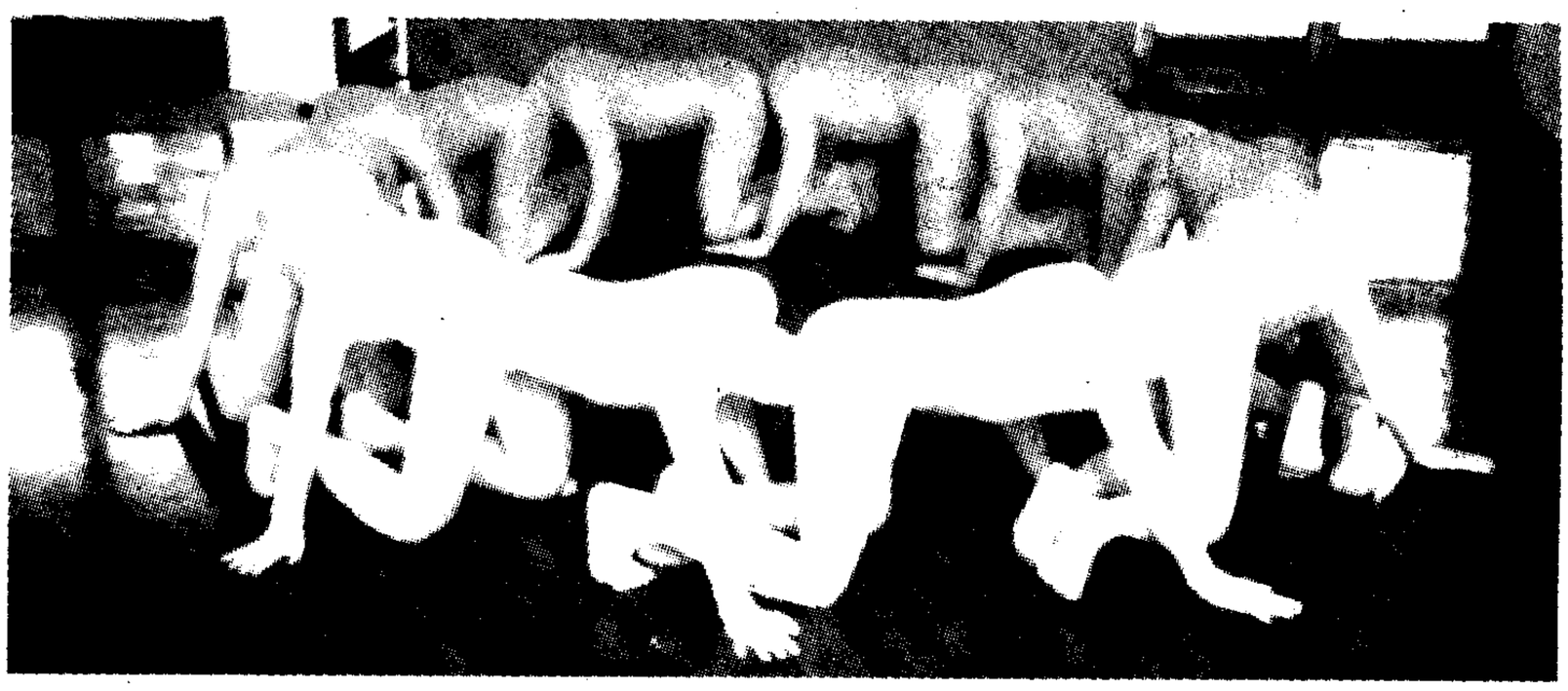


CABINET RESHUFFLE

AHITHERTO unpublished clue to the thinking behind the recent government reshuffle is the prime minister's legendary fear of scandal. No one was more relieved than John Major at the "shelving" of the recent Central Television programme on Ian Greer Associates, the parliamentary lobbyists.

The PM was shocked to read that Greer himself had spoken on the programme of his close friendship with Major — "from years back" — and the various tangible forms of assistance (cars, parties etc) supplied by the ubiquitous Ian Greer Associates.

Most upsetting of all was news that Major's private secretary, the corpulent Graham Bright, had close associations with Greer, who acts for the International Sweeteners Association, formed among others by Mr Bright through his food firm. Bright was summarily and inexplicably sacked in the reshuffle. He got his knighthood; but unlike former private secretaries to the prime minister who are replaced (Ian Gow by Thatcher, for instance, in 1983) he did not get a ministerial job and retires to the backbenches.

Another long-standing friend and associate of Ian Greer is Neil Hamilton, the dashing corporate affairs minister (see Footnotes). He had been widely tipped for promotion but did not get it.

Last October the *Guardian* disclosed that in 1987, before he was a minister, he stayed for a week with his wife at a "European hotel" owned by a client of Greer's with whom Hamilton also had a long-standing relationship. On returning from his luxury week (the whole £5,000 was paid by the owner), Hamilton asked two questions about the company and did not declare the visit in the MPs' register of interests. The *Eye* can disclose that the hotel was the Ritz in Paris, and the firm was owned by the Fayed brothers, owners of the Ritz in Paris and Harrods in London.

Hamilton stays where he is, as does another Greer client looking for promotion: Tim Smith, the former Tory party treasurer, who remains a junior minister in Northern Ireland. In his backbench days Smith astonished colleagues with the range of his parliamentary questions, which often sought information about government accounting contracts.

Smith declared in the register his consultancy with Price Waterhouse. Like Hamilton, Smith had to give up his business contacts when he became a junior minister and has been much the poorer for it. Can he survive on the trivial salary of a parliamentary under-secretary?

If Bright, Smith and Hamilton have been passed over because Major is in a panic about Ian Greer Associates, they could well complain that another minister not a million miles from Greer has slipped through the net. Michael Portillo is one of Greer's oldest friends, wining and dining with the supremo lobbyist long before he hit the headlines. He has been promoted.

JEREMY HANLEY (*Who he?*) was practising the "spin" he will need to put on events as Tory party chairman when he answered a parliamentary question about an unofficial radioactive waste dump at the MoD's Woolwich garrison in south-east London.

The former armed forces minister told John Austin-Walker, Labour MP for Greenwich, that "a small amount of low-level radioactivity has been found in the ground in parts of the Woolwich garrison site". It had arisen, he said, from radium-based paint used for illuminising operations in the 1950s and 1960s and the full extent of contamination was "being assessed so that any necessary remedial action can be undertaken".

If Hanley had read *Eye* 782 he would have known that the assessment was completed nearly three years ago, and that HM inspectorate of pollution (HMIP) established there was at least 1,000 cubic metres of contaminated soil with an average radioactivity of 23 becquerels per cubic centimetre: more than 50 times the level at which decontamination must take place.

Nothing has yet happened, possibly because any operation will require HMIP's authorisation as it would constitute a public health risk.

THE new under-secretary at the department of transport, John Watts, will have to give up his paid position as parliamentary adviser to the big private bus company, British Bus plc.

While he will be expected to adopt a neutral ministerial stand in the forthcoming battles over bus privatisation, he presumably will be hoping *not* to be given ministerial responsibility over the widening of the M4, which is opposed by almost everyone in Slough, even the dwindling Tory party there.

(Watts scraped home as the MP for Slough by 514 votes because a disaffected former Labour councillor called Alford stood as the Labour candidate and got 699 votes).

READERS in Newhaven were much moved by the sterling defence of their MP, Tim Rathbone, against the suggestion (*Eye* 850) that there might be a conflict of interest between the town's economic dependence on the ferry service to Dieppe and his own parliamentary consultancy with Eurotunnel.

The author of the defence, Peter Parfitt-King, modestly did not disclose that he is a Tory councillor. In his letter to the *Eye*, Mr Parfitt-King developed the interesting theory that Mr Rathbone's consultancy would help him understand the problems of cross-channel transport in Newhaven.

Now, however, Mr Rathbone has resigned his consultancy to Eurotunnel. Will Mr Parfitt-King write again to say what a loss this will turn out to be for the people of Newhaven? As ever, the *Eye*'s columns are open.

● *More HP Sleaze* 8

"Bloody rail strike!"

Street Of Shame

ABOARD a flight from Austria to London last Wednesday, *Daily Mirror* hack Christian Gysin and photographer Roger Allen espied a familiar figure quaffing gin and tonic in the Club Class cabin — Kevin Maxwell, son of their late and much-missed proprietor, Cap'n Bob.

Naturally they were keen to introduce themselves. And so, brandishing a *Daily Mirror* envelope, they approached young Maxwell and asked, most courteously, if he "would like to put a few bob in the envelope for the *Mirror* pensioners".

Kevin was unamused. "I can't say anything about it," he spluttered. "I'm awaiting trial." The *Mirror* men pointed out that they weren't asking him to say anything; they were merely requesting a small donation. "This is an invasion of my privacy," Kevin snarled.

Shortly after resuming their seats, Gysin and Allen were approached by the chief stewardess. They assumed she was going to rebuke them for bothering other passengers — but not a bit of it. "All my cabin staff want to congratulate you," she beamed.

Two questions remain. What was Kevin doing in Austria? And, since he and his family are continually pleading penury, how can he afford to travel Club Class?

THE "end of the Maxwell era" — promised so often by David "Rommel" Montgomery, chief executive of Mirror Group Newspapers incorporating the *Independent* — looks like being postponed again.

Mirror Group Newspapers' share price, for instance, which earlier this year broke 200p, is only recovering slightly from its recent frantic fall to 123p, below even the 125p with which Maxwell floated the Mirror in 1991.

Mirror brokers Smith New Court (who were closely associated with Maxwell) predict lower profits than previously expected. Montgomery's master plan — for the *Independent* to save on printing costs and to sack journalists — has been balked by the tough printing contract Portsmouth and Sunderland newspapers originally signed with the *Independent* and by the secure "month for every year of service" contracts obtained in earlier years by the paper's hacks.

For savings, Monty has been looking to traditional Maxwell remedies. *Indie* hacks find they are being paid later and later in the month (a device pioneered by Maxwell in 1985 when he switched payment for *Mirror* hacks from the 6th to the 16th of the month). Some *Indie* hacks have not been paid for months, and the photographers unanimously threatened to strike unless arrears of pay were met (they quickly were).

Meanwhile the delay in Ian Hargreaves' appointment as editor is solely due to his insistence on his control over an expanding editorial budget — an assurance Rommel is reluctant to concede.

Sources close to the Mirror pension trustees suggest that Montgomery may be obliged to cut the employers' contribution to the pension fund, a move which would certainly have commended itself to the Blessed Fat Man now lying on the Mount of Olives.

THERE will be no ugly scenes at an industrial tribunal later this year involving Nigel Pratt-Dumpster of the *Daily Mail*, who seems to have calmed down somewhat since he started swallowing the US wonder drug, Prozac.

The constructive dismissal lawsuit brought against the *Daily Mail* by one of his reporters, Kate Sissons, will not now go ahead, sparing the nation from a ghastly catalogue of alleged abuse that she had to suffer at Dumpster's hands. This ranged from his habitually addressing her as "the cunt" to his hurling a volume of *Who's Who?* over her head.

Sissons has wisely chosen to accept a substantial financial settlement, and Dumpster must now return to his old sport of baiting his deputy, Adam Helliker.

DAVID WALKER, the much-loathed managing editor of the *Financial Times*, recently put out an electronic message to the paper's staff informing them of the memorial service for Ivor Owen, a parliamentary correspondent. This caused some surprise, since Owen is alive and well.

Walker is the hatchet-man who has been responsible for getting rid of a whole stream of hacks the management has taken a dislike to. Is poor Ivor on the hit-list?

SADLY the demise of Charles "Experienced" Golding, former deputy editor of the *Sunday Express*, was greeted with undisguised glee by many of the paper's staff, who for a while refused to believe the news was true.

When eventually they witnessed Golding's appearance to collect his personal effects, they savoured the moment. Having dropped off his company car, he was led into the building by the hatchet-faced personnel director Struan Cooper.

John Honeywell, the managing editor accused by Golding of being a drunk (the accusation which proved Golding's downfall), could hardly suppress his emotions as he handed him several sturdy black bin bags in which to stow his belongings. Then, when the family photographs had been packed, Eve Bollard herself escorted Golding along the length of the newsroom as the hacks watched silently. "His face were as fooking white as fooking seagull-shit," a northern hack later recalled.

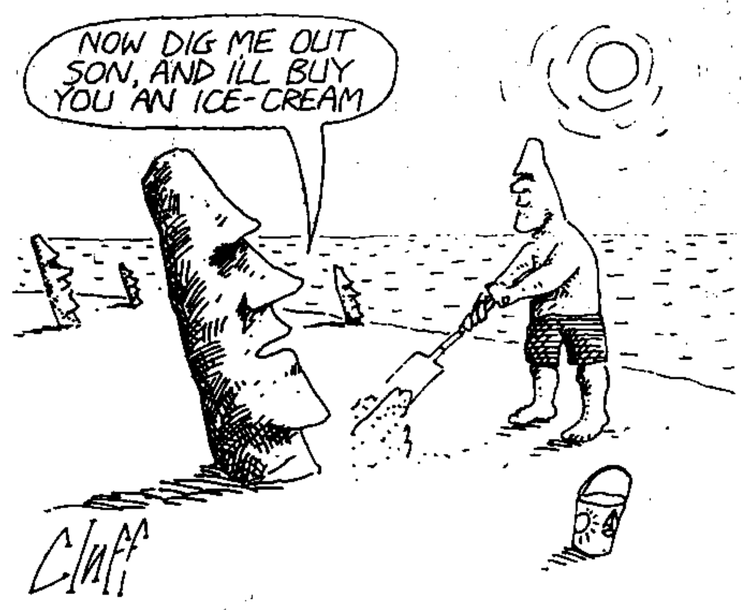
As Golding and Bollard went through the doors leading to the lifts, the entire room erupted in cheers and desk-thumpings. The hacks then pressed their noses against the windows in order to see the unfortunate Golding climb into a waiting minicab.

But what of Dominic Prince, the paper's former City editor who was sacked for heroically reporting Golding's unprofessional comments about senior executives to the editor? A week later fellow hacks canonised him at El Vino's.

Various senior executives, such as Anna Stewart and Jim Anderson, were warned off attending; but the fearless editor of the Scottish edition, Alan Cochrane, flew from Glasgow for the occasion. The party cost more than £500, paid for by 150 or so of Prince's fellow hacks.

THE *Daily* and *Sunday Express* take a firm editorial line on law 'n' order, so it is distressing to learn that their respective editors, Sir Nick Lloyd and Eve Bollard (aka the Freelloyders), have themselves unwittingly committed an offence.

They have included inaccurate information in documents lodged at Companies House for Faithmist Ltd, the private company which handles



Bollard's income from her TV and radio appearances.

The latest accounts, filed last December, list the company's two directors as Sir Nick and Lady Lloyd — but claim that they have no other directorships. Since they are both directors of Express Newspapers, this is not quite correct — unless of course the Express Group has sacked them both and nobody has told us.

IN THE last *Eye* we reported on the behaviour of the *Daily Telegraph*'s restaurant critic, John Whitley, who had written a damning review of a dish which he hadn't eaten — and which hadn't even been on the menu when he visited the place.

It now transpires this was not his only foray into "creative writing". Last year Whitley reviewed the Four Seasons restaurant in Nantgaredig, Dyfed, where he had eaten a rack of Welsh lamb. Strangely, although he dined alone, his article referred to what amounted to dinner for two. More oddly still, he savaged the restaurant's allegedly "dull" home-made tagliatelle, which was not on the menu when he paid his visit. It was, however, on a sample menu which Whitley had later asked the restaurant to send him.

"It seems to me," the Four Seasons' owner, Simon Wright, wrote to Whitley, "that you have taken two dishes at random from the menu I sent you and, without overtaxing your imagination, arrived at the adjectives 'dull' and 'oversauced'. Perhaps I am being naive. Is this normal practice among food writers? I think we should be told."

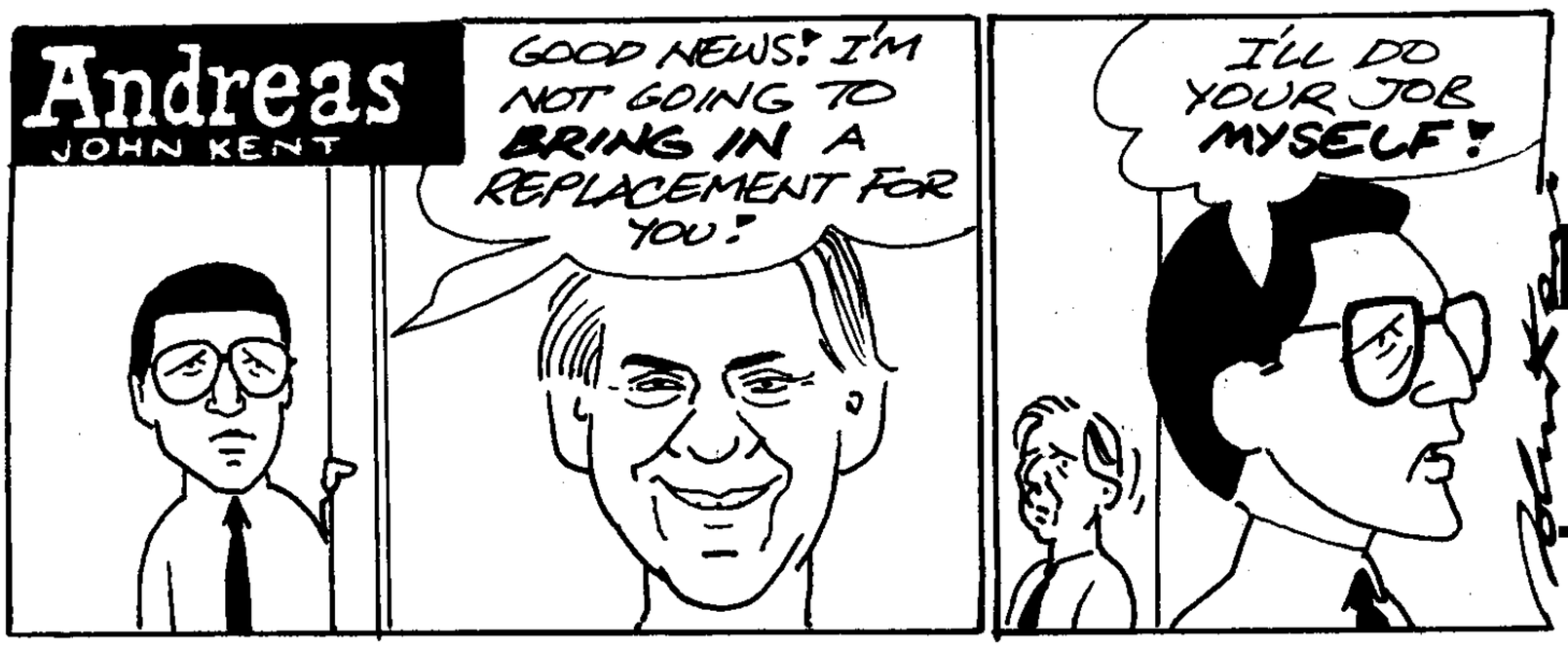
In reply, Whitley attributed his comments on the dishes he hadn't tasted to "contacts in the area". Yet his piece had given the clear impression that he had personally eaten the pasta, and that the opinions were all his.

The argument is now academic as Whitley was sacked last week. But is he the only offender? Lord Gnome would be interested to hear of any other examples of restaurant critics "oversaucing" their reviews.

JUST FANCY THAT

ON A night that should have belonged to Elle MacPherson, actress Elizabeth Hurley managed to accrue more than her fair share of attention. *Evening Standard, 13/7/94 (page 3)*

A vision of Antipodean loveliness in her diaphanous mini-dress, Miss Elle MacPherson monopolised the fickle paparazzi's attention at last night's West End premiere. Miss Elizabeth Hurley — she of That Dress — was largely ignored. *Evening Standard, 13/7/94 (page 9)*



HALLO!

The new heartwarming column by *The Marquesa*

HALLO! WE ARE greatly looking forward to reading the forthcoming novel by Princess Michael of Kent.

Sadly the carpers are already sneering, though. What, they ask, could a royal — albeit an ambitious minor one whose father had such an interesting war — possibly have to write about in a blockbuster novel? And who will do the research?

Admittedly the princess's last book about something or other was almost entirely lifted from other books. But as someone who knows her well and understands, the Marquesa can assure readers the princess is planning a shopping and fking novel and needs no help with original research on shopping or the other one.**

HALLO! PRINCESS MARGARET is another misunderstood royal, so it was gratifying to learn that commoners in Somerstown, near King's Cross, make her most welcome when she graced the 70th anniversary of the St Pancras Housing Association.

Not only was £2,000 spent on a marquee and lavatory catering for Margaret's special needs, but new tiles were laid along her route. This was very good news for tenants who are always told there is no money for improvements to their flats. Clearly that is not now the case.

HALLO! *CHIVALRY does still exist in this woeful world, even though a book has been published by that pinguid pipsqueak of a so-called historian, Andrew Roberts, which displays very little.*

His Eminent Churchillians is extremely rude about two of Dame Barbara Cartland's deceased friends: Lord Mountbatten, who is accused of being careless with other people's lives; and Sir Arthur Bryant, that charmingly old-fashioned historian and English patriot, who is accused of being a Nazi.

What is more, the chapter on Bryant contains a sarcastic reference to Dame Barbara's abilities as a writer, scorning Bryant's comparison of her lucid prose to that of Evelyn Waugh, P.G. Wodehouse and Nancy Mitford.

Happily, however, the Daily Telegraph's literary editor, John Coldstream, knows how to deal with this uncharitable farrago of lies and distortions. Instead of giving the book to an eminent historian or politician to review, he has sent it to Dame Barbara!

HALLO! IN THE shallow world of pop where massive egos reign supreme, one singer at least is setting an example by refusing to play the celebrity game.

Van Morrison, the huge (*shurely "hugely"?*) gifted singer-composer, has refused to take part in a documentary about the Ulster music scene. A solicitor's letter to the film makers revealed that Ivan Morrison Esq simply doesn't do that sort of thing anymore.

Undeterred the ITV team had a word with his on-off girlfriend, Dublin socialite Michelle Rocca. No, explained Michelle, Van wasn't the selfish, bitter, twisted and ungrateful slob the music papers portray.

La Rocca promised to send the ageing rocker a fax securing his co-operation, but Van had other ideas. Another solicitor's letter arrived at the production company, reiterating his refusal to be interviewed and imposing a blanket ban on the use of any video clips featuring him.

This is a major blow to any documentary on Irish music, so the producers have asked the lawyers to reconsider — generously offering only to use video clips "which don't make your client look fat". Whether any such footage exists is debatable.

HALLO! *STAYING at a famous Highland estate in Royal Deeside, the Marquesa was frightfully impressed by the strapping men of the local mountain rescue service — but distressed when one of their dogs was poisoned by illegal bait left out for things like eagles, wild cats and buzzards.*

An embarrassed silence descended, and matters were not helped when I cheerfully reminded my hosts that Prince Charles's pet dog Camilla ("Pooh", shurely?) *had recently gone missing in the area in suspicious circs. What can it all mean, I wonder?*

HALLO! ONE'S older chums in the Conservative party pondering the travails of Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare will recall the astonishing financial expertise he displayed during his days as the MP for Louth.

One day in the Commons Archer approached a Conservative whom he barely knew and, apropos nothing at all, barked: "I made £160,000 this morning... I bought a property from one agent, walked down the road to another and sold it to him for £160,000 more."

"Gosh," the senior man at last replied weakly. Two weeks later Archhole resigned his seat laden with debts of several hundred thousand pounds.

HALLO! **TO RADLEY School, alma mater of such eminent figures as the comedian Peter Cook** (*Who he? Ed.*), **where we have been invited by that charming tycoon Conrad Black to join in his "fun day" for** *Telegraph* **staff and their families.**

The sun shines, cricket is played, the barbecue sizzles, ice creams are consumed in abundance, and a delightful time is had by all. Well, nearly all.

Some children who are playing happily on a "bouncy castle" are joined by the pneumatically upholstered Ms Barbara Amiel, Mr Black's latest wife. Not to be outdone, the *Telegraph*'s dashing editor Max Hastings kicks off his shoes and leaps on to the bouncy castle as well — whereupon, alas, several of the children burst into tears.

HALLO! *LIKE my old friend General Franco, I have no time for party politics. But I am concerned that left-wing agitators who caused so much embarrassment to the delightful Dame Shirley Porter are making trouble for others on Westminster council, particularly those in town planning.*

Only two months ago the delicate Olga Polizzi, daughter of Lord Forte, a director of the family company and herself a marquesa, resigned as vice chair of Westminster's planning committee.

So fragrant is the Marchioness Polizzi she makes even Mary Archer appear fetid. It is outrageous that one so devoted to motorway services (shurely "public" services?) should be under a cloud of suspicion because of a passing acquaintance with a bunch of voteriggers.

Her filthy socialist detractors must admit immediately that Olga is innocent. We marquesas must stick together!

Pseuds Corner

What's the most exciting thing you've ever found?

DESMOND WILCOX, television producer: My wife's mind. Esther Rantzen and I have been together for 25 years now and her mind is still a constant surprise and delight to me. It's a bit like looking at one of those glass globes where you shake it up and it's a different picture all the time. I get exactly the same pleasure out of her thinking processes as I do out of a piece of Venetian glass.

Independent on Sunday

The superb manager, Lucio Zanon, showed me to a table for two, the only mistake of the day. I never sit at tables for two even if I am two. I sit at tables for four.

MICHAEL WINNER
Sunday Times

Feminist theory is in *fin de siècle* mode: self-fashioning ("constructivism") is winning out everywhere that's anywhere, and drag, cross-dressing, travesty are the metaphors. The result has been a vertiginous, even breath-taking renewal of theory's *effrontery*, the kind of offensive artifice seldom seen since the 1970s and the heyday of Héléne Cixous. Now, American intellectuals like Judith Butler talk of "women" as a temporary totalization, a kind of "necessary error" — "the term (women) marks a dense intersection of social relations that cannot be summarized through the terms of identity". The perverse pleasures to be extracted from even such dry formulations is what the gap between theory and practice is all about: theory is the region where common sense dies, and we can afford for a moment to recognize the life-giving properties of paradox. Women "are" female impersonators.

LORNA SAGE
Times Literary Supplement

As a National Serviceman (the best two years of my life), I learned to be a first-class shot with rifle, Bren and Sten, rejoicing in the neat precision of the first, the power of the second, and the ready sexuality of the third.

BRIAN SEWELL
Evening Standard

As art practised in the temples of art is just a matter of assertion, you could say that the only place where many of the visual traditions of art and the use of classical references is being continued is in advertising.

For instance, a Peugeot driving through burning cane fields is redolent of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse moving towards some sort of *Gotterdammerung...*

BRIAN SEWELL
Marketing

CONTRIBUTORS: Everyone (record entry), B. Davis, D.J. Taylor, M. White, A. Wiven,

£10 paid for entries

Anagram

MICHAEL A. ATHERTON = LO! I'M AN EARTH CHEAT!

Sincerely,
MICHAEL R. COOK,
Ealing, W13.

IN THE TEAROOM

MINISTERS "axed"... colleagues "knifed"... "blood on the carpet"... So clichéd and bloody is the vocabulary of cabinet reshuffles it could come straight out of Michael Dobbs.

But the truth is tamer: man in suit, deprived of his official Rover, promptly signs up for some fat directorships and can now afford a Jag of his own.

This time nice Mr Major spared his sacked ministers even the small humiliation of having to walk past gloating cameras in Downing Street. Next day in the tearoom, loitering whips were delighted to overhear backbench Tories convincing one another how well it had all gone.

Jeremy Hanley was judged an "inspired choice" by the same gang who only a few weeks ago, in dread of Lord Archhole, had insisted the new party chairman be a man of serious political weight.

Nor was anyone complaining that Messrs Gummer and Waldegrave had survived, though their sackings, together with that of the prime minister's parliamentary private secretary Graham Bright and a thorough cleansing of the Downing Street policy unit, had been loudly demanded for months.

Some fun was had at the expense of Mr Bright's successor, the reclusive 69-year-old John Ward, when the wags of the '92 intake noisily insisted that he didn't exist. Finally, someone was found who claimed to have met the man who will be the PM's main line of communication with the backbenches, but he couldn't remember what he looked like.

Smugly contemplating all this jollity was the real architect of the reshuffle, the chief whip Richard Ryder.

In fixing David Hunt's new job, for example, Ryder pulled off a clever finesse. Hunt has been led to believe that he is not simply taking over the citizen's charter from Waldegrave, who moves to agriculture, but that he will be one of the three most important men in government: chairing cabinet committees; licensed to interfere in colleagues' business; and as "banana-skin spotter in chief" — someone whose solemn warnings will be heeded by all.

Mr Hunt's enemies — and there are many on the right — have been quietly reassured meanwhile that his real role will be to take the blame for each and every government cock-up to come.

Ryder wants another head upon which steaming buckets of public obloquy and media indignation can be poured so he can keep John Major pristine for the general election. Such scheming and manipulation from a chief whip... It could come straight out of Michael Dobbs!

'Urquart'

ONE of the many Tory MPs who leapt to the defence of Graham Riddick and David Tredinnick and accused the *Sunday Times* of "entrapment" in the £1,000-per-question scandal was Tim Devlin, the young MP for Stockport South.

Without declaring his own interest in Riddick (he was an usher at the latter's wedding), Devlin said he had been an MP for seven years and had never heard of anyone attempting to bribe an MP.

This was Devlin's last intervention as a parliamentary private secretary. A week later he was out on his nose: sacked for bad attendance, according to the Tory whips (this was rubbish; his attendance was no worse than the average Tory backbencher's); according to him, he resigned because of the closure in his constituency of a naval base in the government's latest defence cuts.

Devlin's concern about jobs in his constituency, however, is genuine. In February this year he intervened to denounce his fellow Stockton MP, Frank Cook, for daring to raise the receivership in Stockton of Livera Foods.

Mr Devlin modestly took a lot of the credit for the opening of a Livera cake factory in his constituency in 1992. He "planted" a question for his hero, Michael Portillo, then minister of state for the environment, about the opening of the factory. It cost £7 million, much of it provided by the taxpayer via their expensive quango, the Teesside Development Corporation. The mastermind behind the cake factory was Chris Liveras, who was jailed for four years for fraud in 1976. That criminal past didn't worry Messrs Portillo or Devlin, who sang sweetly about the 700 jobs the cake factory would provide.

Cook intervened in Parliament last February because Livera Foods had gone bust and all its workers were being pushed back on to the dole. He wanted to know how much public money had been wasted and why. Devlin said the development corporation was "taking urgent steps to examine the matter". "The government," he went on, "who have invested heavily in the factory have done so quite correctly."

The factory is still closed.

IRASCIBLE Ian Paisley, Euro MP for Northern Island, was even angrier than usual when the European parliament reconvened in Strasbourg and he found the seating arrangements in the chamber had been changed.

One of the longest-sitting MEPs (15 years), Paisley — who describes himself as "quite middle of the road" and normally plonks himself down with independent and non-aligned members in the centre of the chamber — found that he was now sitting among members of the French National Front.

Hearing Italian speaking MEPs nearby, his suspcions were further aroused — and soon confirmed: the Democratic Unionist member, parliament officials decided, was a bone fide fascist and should be seated accordingly.

"It is ridiculous to put me in the same area as these fascists," boomed the big man, after insisting that he wasn't a right-winger and certainly didn't hold extreme views.

LABOUR whips, backed by Nick Brown, an opposition treasury spokesman, made fools of themselves over the government's attempt to set up the privileges committee to investigate the "£1,000 a parliamentary question row".

When their colleague Dale Campbell Savours told them that he would block the setting up of the committee because its proposed Tory members held 18 directorships and nine consultancies between them, he was summoned to see Brown who revealed that he had already done a deal with the Tory Tony Newton, leader of the House, to let the setting up of the committee through on the nod.

Heaven knows why, but Labour whips backed Brown's deal. Undeterred, Campbell-Savours gave him a lecture on parliamentary democracy, saying the public expected Labour MPs to fight sleaze rather than condone it. Campbell-Savours then blocked the establishment of the committee.

The next day, at a private meeting of the parliamentary Labour party, Labour chief whip Derek Foster astonished everyone by citing "precedent" as the reason Labour had not opposed Tory MPs sitting on the committee even if they themselves were "on the take". Thus did the government get its way.

Lookalike

Riddick

Tweedledee

Sir,

Have other readers noticed the resemblance between Tory MP Graham Riddick and Tweedledee? Perhaps someone has spoilt Mr Riddick's nice new rattle. I think we should be told.

Yours faithfully,
KEITH SPENCE,
Tunbridge Wells.

BILL WALKER, the eccentric Tory MP for Tayside North, was incensed when he discovered that the man who rung him up offering him £1,000 to ask a question was a reporter from the *Sunday Times*.

"I look forward to the tape recordings of my conversations being heard in full," he bellowed in the House on 13 July. "I welcome that. I believe they would have the same effect as the Richard Nixon tapes had on Richard Nixon and on the individual who obtained those recordings."

LABOUR's education plans — which will lead to the abolition of grant-maintained schools if realised — will not just cause ructions for the children of Tony Blair.

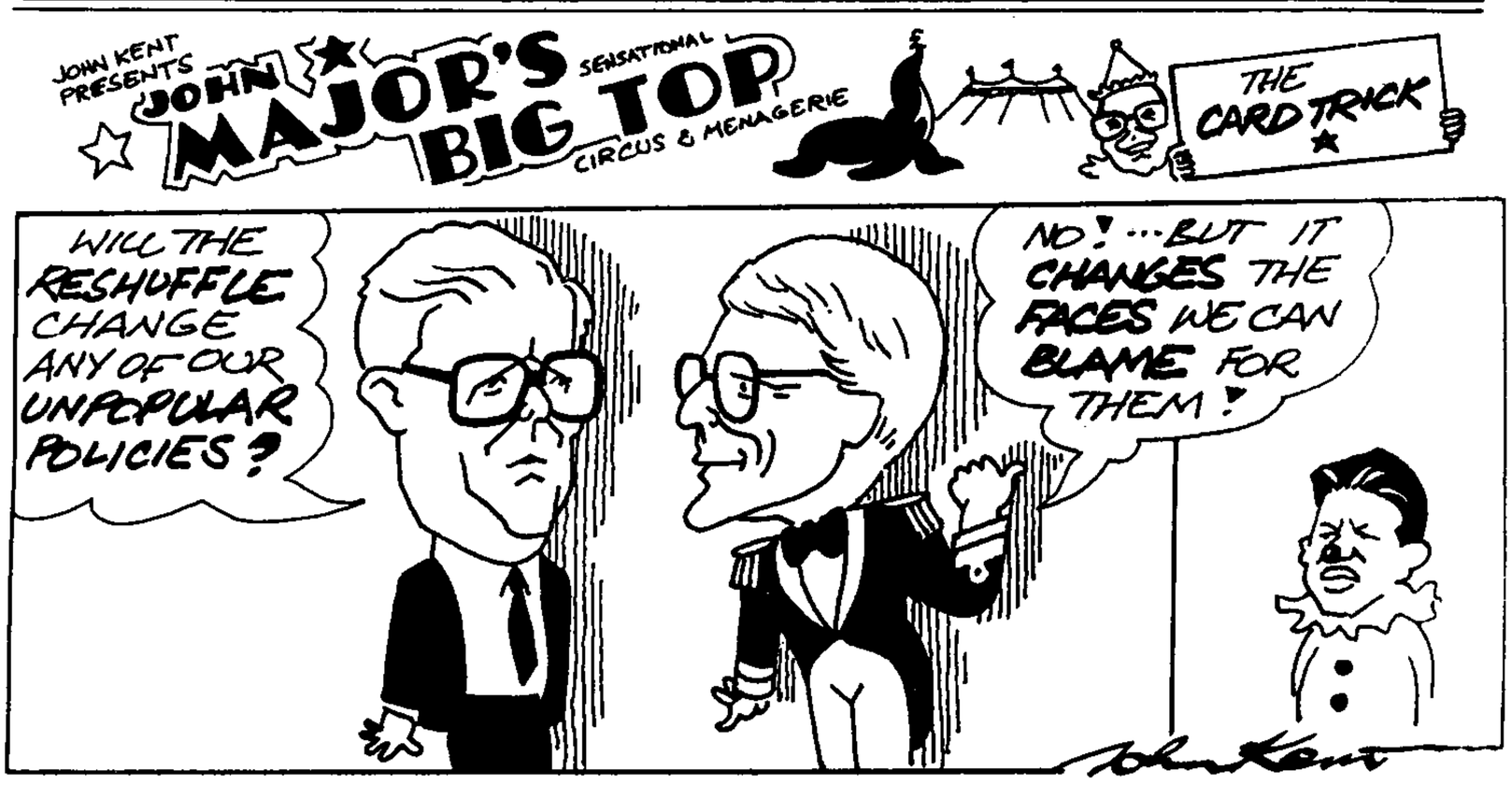
One of John Patten's parting shots as Tory education secretary was to attack Harriet Harman, Labour's shadow chief secretary to the treasury, who also sends her son to a grant maintained school.

The attack, however, only served to exposed the fact that members of the shadow cabinet hate each other's guts.

Under pressure from Labour backbencher Derek Enright, Betty Boothroyd, the speaker, lambasted Patten saying: "It is totally outrageous that members' children... should be used in politics across the floor of the House."

But Hansard did not record that when Patten criticised Harman a Labour backbencher called on Ann Taylor, Labour's shadow education secretary, to leap to her colleague's defence. Despite repeated requests Taylor refused to help, replying: "It is none of my business."

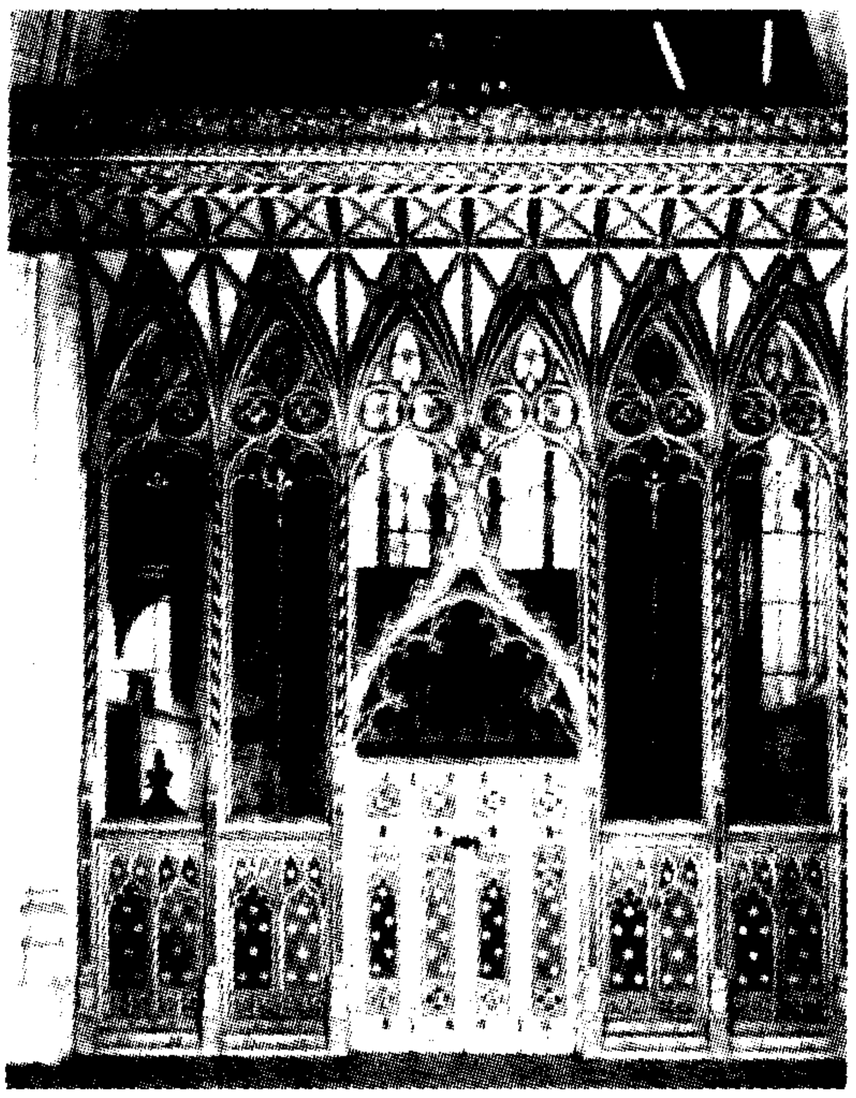
'Backbiter'


JOHN KENT PRESENTS
JOHN MAJOR'S SENSATIONAL BIG TOP CIRCUS & MENAGERIE
THE CARD TRICK
WILL THE RESHUFFLE CHANGE ANY OF OUR UNPOPULAR POLICIES?
NO! ...BUT IT CHANGES THE FACES WE CAN BLAME FOR THEM!
John Kent

NOOKS and CORNERS

THE shelves are full; the V&A logo is raised on high; and the lights on the tills burn bright. The saintly portraiture on the t-shirts shines gloriously; the jewellery hangs in the glass cases; and there are piles of glossy books, china, wallpaper, textiles, candles and postcards. Attached to this bustling shop there also happens to be a rather splendid exhibition about that sad, mad, fascinating architect Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin.

And not before time. Although a religious maniac besotted with Gothic and with churches, Pugin was one of the great designers of the 19th century who inspired several generations after his early death at the age of 40. The V&A should have mounted a show about him years ago; but Mrs Esteve-Coll's economically truthful institution has forgotten why it exists aud will only mount serious exhibitions with 100 percent commercial sponsorship (and not-so-serious ones, for that matter: remember that impressive flop "Royalty"?)



The worry with any exhibition about ecclesiastical design is whether the beautiful objects on display will ever return to the churches from which they were borrowed. Back in 1971 in the "Victorian Church Art" show, the V&A displayed the huge tabernacle which Pugin had designed for St Augustine's Roman Catholic church in Ramsgate and which had dominated his "Mediaeval Court" at the Great Exhibition of 1851. After the iconoclastic and gratuitous "reordering" of the church Pugin had designed and built and paid for himself, the monks at Ramsgate had no further use for it. It now sits, incongruously, in a side-chapel in Southwark (Anglican) Cathedral.

This time the worry is the painted wooden rood screen by Pugin which has been reerected in the ecclesiastical court in the V&A exhibition. Or, rather, the worry is the church it came from: St Mary's, West Tofts, Norfolk. This was a medieval church near Thetford which Pugin rebuilt, extended and embellished with a wealth of decoration, woodwork, tiles, monuments and stained glass. It is, or was, glorious. As so many of Pugin's Roman Catholic churches have been damaged or spoiled (the worst case being the brutal rape of Killarney Cathedral by fat, jovial, adulterous Bishop Casey), West Tofts church ought to be a shrine to one of England's greatest artistic talents. Alas, this cannot be as the public is allowed nowhere near it.

West Tofts church — an English parish church — was seized in 1942 by the British army so the land on which it stands could be used as a practice battleground. Fair enough, perhaps, in the run-up to D-Day — except that the ministry of defence is still in occupation today.

The Victorian Society has been complaining about this since the 1960s, but the military remains immovable. As no repairs have been carried out the church has deteriorated: the roof is leaking and there is dry rot. Essential repairs are now likely to cost at least £250,000, but all the army does is squabble with the Church of England over who should pay the bill.

This, of course, is just one example of barbaric anti-social behaviour by the MoD — the worst case being the wicked neglect of the wealth of historic buildings at Woolwich Arsenal. But the seizure and destruction of West Tofts church is particularly reprehensible as the building stands only some 600 yards inside the barbed wire and is well outside the live firing area. Public access could easily be arranged if the MoD did not consider British civilians to be the enemy.

Things may be changing. Shamed by exposure of the dreadful and self-defeating treatment of such places as Woolwich, the MoD now promises to try "keeping the public informed" about historic buildings in its ownership — or so Lord Cranborne, as under secretary of state for defence, assured us in a new booklet, *Defending our Heritage*. A start could be made by repairing the roof at West Tofts and making a small change in the position of the boundary fence so that we can visit and admire Pugin's wonderful work.

BUT West Tofts is not the only cause for concern while the V&A celebrates Pugin. For the famous house and church he built on the cliffs at Ramsgate are also in danger.

Pugin's own house, The Grange, where he lived with his third wife — "a first-rate Gothic woman" — and where he died, was long neglected by the monks of St Augustine's Abbey. A few years back there was a good chance that it could have been bought by a wealthy and knowledgeable Pugin enthusiast for occupation and restoration. But the good monks gazumped him and sold instead to some local amateur speculators who hoped to divide it into flats. A grade I listing thwarted that; so now Pugin's house is up for sale again. As both St Augustine's church and The Grange next door are now sandwiched between a busy road and a hideous container-port below the cliff, and as it needs money spent on it, a high price is unlikely to be achieved.

Who will rescue Pugin's devoted creation? English Heritage? The National Trust? Very unlikely, although millions can be found to recreate a burned-out Georgian country house like Uppark. Pugin's group of buildings at Ramsgate are of infinitely greater significance in the history of British architecture, but as poor old Pugin well knew, there is no justice in this world.

'Piloti'

SALLY DEEDES

SUN ALLIANCE customers may be interested in the curious PS to the story of Nigel Watts, the shareholder wrongfully arrested by police at the insurance giant's extraordinary general meeting after he asked questions about its former chairman, Lord Aldington.

The latest twist in the saga that stems from publication of the notorious "Aldington pamphlet" by Mr Watts and Count Nicholas Tolstoy came last week. It was the award to Mr Watts of £5,000 in damages following his successful claim for wrongful arrest against the Metropolitan police, who must now pay court costs of £150,000.

Mr Watts had asked the shareholders' meeting when Lord Aldington would be returning the £450,000 "loaned" to him by Sun Alliance to fund his libel action against Mr Watts and the count. Before you could say Cossack Dancer, he was asked to leave and manhandled out of the building in handcuffs.

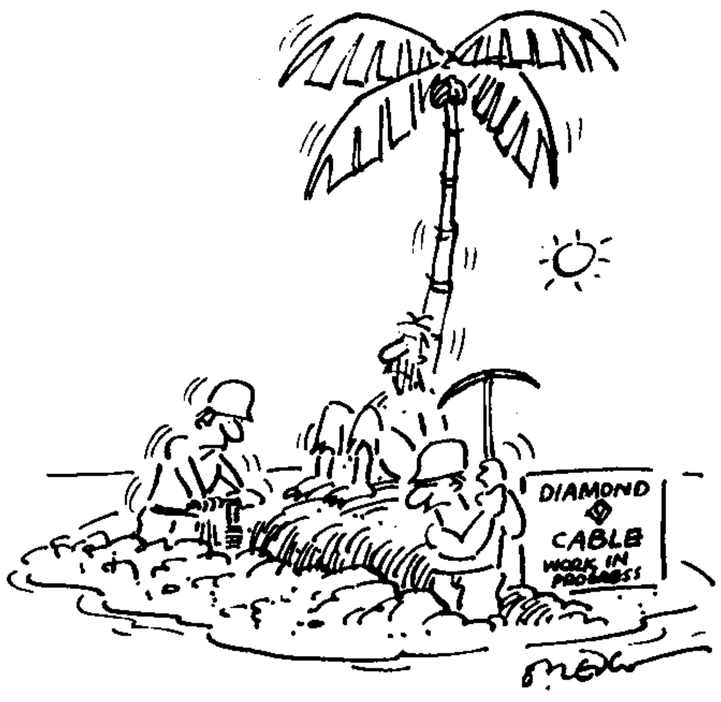
It has emerged that police officers fabricated their notes to justify the wrongful arrest — and, more ironically, that the insurance company that underwrites the Met is none other than the Sun Alliance!

PPS: It was not until May this year that Sun Alliance shareholders learned that Lord Aldington had not repaid the "loan" and that the money had been written off.

SHOULD the government allow cable television companies to dig up Britain's pavements and roads willy-nilly? Mrs Ivy Shepherd, a 90 year old who lives in Worthing, does not think so.

In May this year she narrowly escaped with her life when a gas explosion demolished her house. Police believe the blast may have been unwittingly triggered by contractors who were laying cable for the TV firm Nynex and hit a gas main outside her home. The company has not admitted liability.

Nynex, like other cable operators, can apparently dig up roads and pavements and stick cable junction boxes wherever it wants. A spokesman for the East Sussex highway authority confirmed that the DTI had granted Nynex a licence like those given to gas and electricity companies. Did they cause problems? Yes, I was told, there had been difficulties putting pavements and roads back into a useable condition. But what about house foundations?



POPEYE

THE appointment by PolyGram of the selfless Tony Wilson to head the Factory 2 label may not be universally welcomed by creditors of the original Factory Communications.

Headed by Wilson, that company collapsed 18 months ago with debts of £2.5 million. As predicted in *Eye* 813, PolyGram has, via its London label subsidiary, picked up the rights to the Factory name while signing one of the major Factory acts, New Order, directly to the label.

By an extraordinary coincidence, neither New Order nor the other big name band on the label, Happy Mondays, was under contract when the original company faced the music.

LUVVIES

"Sure he was self-destructive, but d'you know something? He *never* complained." Theatre was important. "You've *got* to have it! You've *got* to fucking have it!"

NICOL WILLIAMSON
(on John Barrymore)
Independent on Sunday

Submitted by A. Davie.

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

EYE TV

Pets Win Prizes (BBC1)

Gagtag (BBC1)

JONATHAN Ross and Danny Baker have many things in common. The first is that both attempted to build a British television career on copying the — then cult, now mainstream — American television host, David Letterman.

Both Ross's first Channel 4 talk-show *The Last Resort* and Baker's recent BBC1 attempt *Danny Baker After All* were clones — from furniture to script — of NBC's *Late Night With Letterman*. Indeed, Baker's aping was so intense he now even speaks American, referring on a recent show to "eyeglasses", the American for specs, which is what he meant.

Yet, though themselves motivated by imitation, the appeal of Ross and Baker to British TV and radio executives had less to do with the Letterman factor than with the Doberman factor. Both men have done very well from being the bit of sub-Cockney populist rough in the schedules of the posh channels: Channel 4, BBC1. ITV naturals, they have, curiously, scarcely worked there.

The third — and most inexplicable — thing the lads have in common is that, no matter how many flops they are associated with, the bosses still offer them another chance. His TV chat show a disappointment, his Radio 1 morning show a disaster, Baker this week got another BBC peak-time slot with **Pets Win Prizes**, a show which invites incredulity from the title downwards.

His latest Channel 4 chat-and-sketch show an embarrassment, his series of one-on-ones with Hollywood luvvies shunted close to midnight on BBC1, Ross this week opened a new show, in BBC1 peak-time, called **Gagtag**, a show unwisely showing no nervousness about the alternative vomit interpretation of its title.

The executive behind both resurrections is Alan Yentob, controller of BBC1. He has often said that, at the BBC, shows should not be judged merely by their ratings performance. Non-commercial television, he has stressed, must include the "right to fail". In many ways these are commendable sentiments, but Yentob may, in the case of Baker and Ross, be taking them too far. It is as if these lads have moved beyond the "right to fail" to a kind of "divine right to fail".

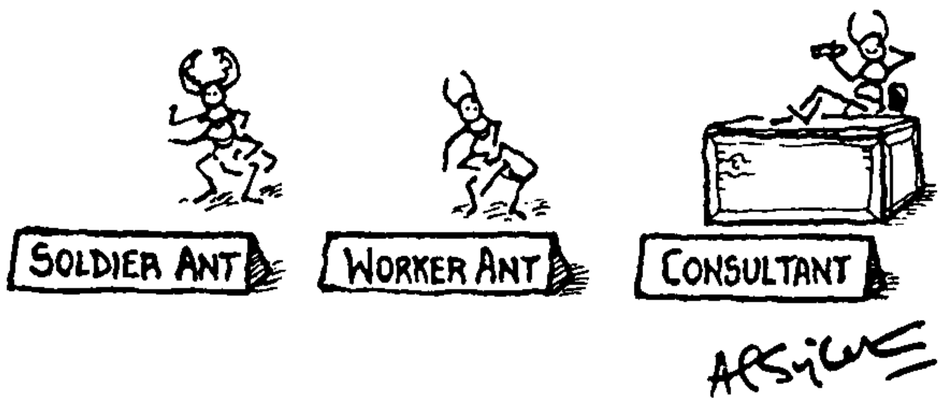
Pets Win Prizes — a game show for animals — is another unfortunate manifestation of Baker's David Letterman obsession. Big Dave has always done animal stunts on his shows, and "Tortoise Speed Marathon", one of the elements in *Pets Win Prizes*, has the authentic viewer-friendly surrealism of the American's style.

Letterman, however, uses pet humour only as an occasional part of his programmes. Like all fans, Baker has gone too far in his obsession and made a single element fundamental, stretching two-minute wit to 40. Also, this is England and the BBC feels obliged to advise that: "Animal lovers will be relieved to know that *Really Wild Roadshow*'s Terry Nutkins will be on hand to make sure the creatures aren't mistreated." Surrealism and wackiness make uneasy bedfellows with the RSPCA.

In *Gagtag* — Ross's latest derivative comeback vehicle — team captains Frank Skinner and Bob Monkhouse join up with another comic to play such games as providing as many punchlines as possible in a fixed time to an opener like: "I wouldn't say he was ugly but..."

There are two main problems with the show. The first is Ross's script. It is obviously supposed to be funny. But intros like "And as Jean-Paul Gaultier would say, 'Owze about some Gagtag, my Breetish chums' " are so lame as to be equivalent, in a show based around jokes, to the host of an aerobics series turning up in an iron lung. The second difficulty is that the quick-thinking requirement of the rounds encourages the comics to clutch for their oldest and crudest gags. Monkhouse, like most comics, is better with written material.

The only success in the format is the sharp, young Frank Skinner, but this merely raises another irritating mystery. Skinner is employed by Alan Yentob as a sort of Red Adair, called in to save series likely to become disasters. He salvaged the Terry Wogan vehicle *Do The Right Thing*. His reward should, logically, have been promotion to host of his own show. But here he is again, sent out in the salvage boat again, to try to stop Ross going down in flames. How long before Yentob panics and sends Skinner as "permanent co-host" to *Pets Win Prizes*?



The reasons for Baker's fascination with cultural ephemera — with forgotten idols of the box — become increasingly clear. He has a tragic intimation of his own fate. Soon, an edition of Baker's *TV Heroes* will deal with himself and Jonathan Ross: "Two likely London lads who — for one fleeting summer in the early 90s — seemed to have the world of television at their feet. But where are they now?" A few months later, an edition of Baker's *Bygones* will feature a packet of the soap powder he used to flog on the box.

Nostalgia — retro sentimentality — once seemed to be Danny Baker's hobby. Now it looks increasingly as if it was his insurance policy.

'Square Eyes'

MEDIA NEWS

HOME shopping, said to be in the vanguard of the multi-channel interactive TV revolution, is so far a big flop.

In the United States, the QVC home shopping channel run by Rupert Murdoch's former henchman Barry Diller is losing sales and audience (Diller is trying to rescue his company through a reverse takeover of the CBS network).

It is doing badly on this side of the pond, too, where it is involved in a 50-50 joint venture with the Murdoch-controlled BSkyB. Sales and viewing figures have been even worse than in the US and rumours are circulating that Murdoch wants to say goodbye to his old chum, bouncing QVC off the Sky package altogether.

Back home in the US meanwhile the Digger may be about to dump on another old friend, Andrew Neill. Talking to broadcasters recently, Murdoch said: "If our dreams are realised, our sports, entertainment and animation divisions each has the potential to... fill your multiple digital channels on the broadcast freeway of the not too distant future."

There was no mention of news and current affairs even though the sole reason Neill went to Manhattan was to beef up this very area for Fox TV. Some predict Neill will be back at Annabel's with a substantial Ivan Fallon style pay-off sooner rather than later having been declared surplus to programming requirements.

MUSIC & MUSICIANS

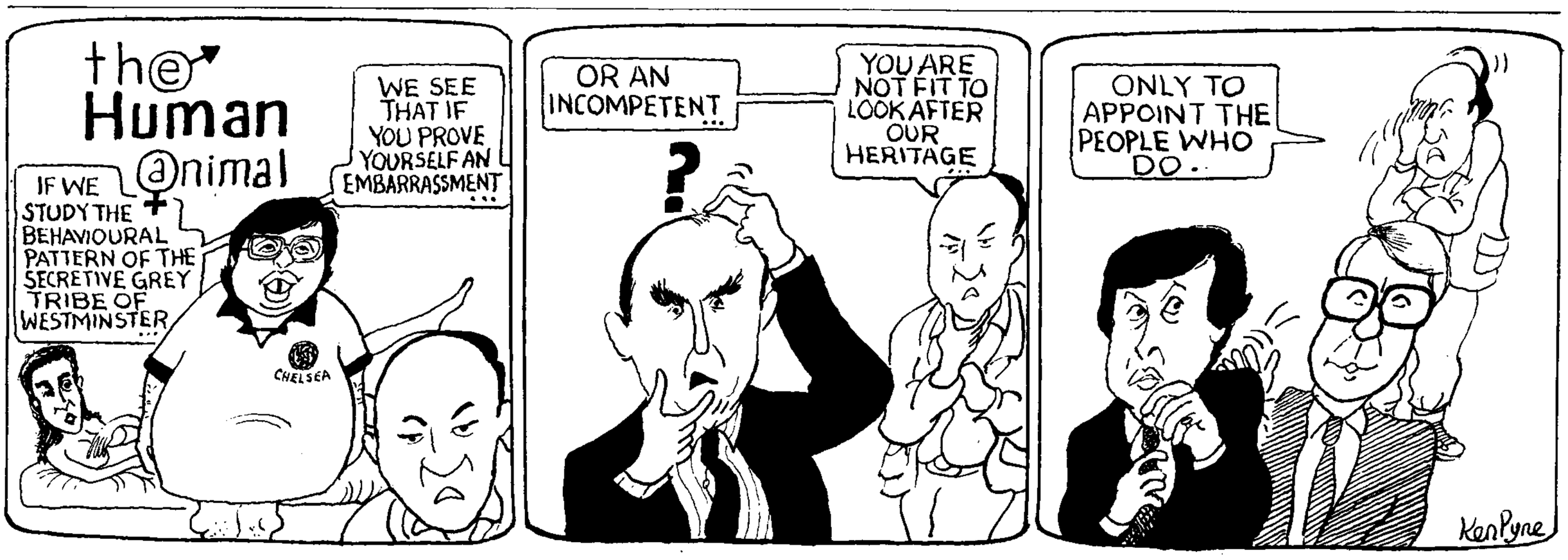
THE busy South Bank Centre is advertising for three more people to join its "high profile customer services team... to be a key interface with other departments and support the work of our six customer services managers".

The SBC already spends £8 million of its £14 million grant on wages to its 680 staff (it has far more staff than other comparable European arts centres). But potential applicants might care to see a briefing paper for a series of presentations sent to Lunchtime O'Boulez.

Called *The Way Forward*, its 17 pages of Orwellian newspeak set out the kind of exciting things customer services get up to. These include a 10-stage plan to sack the entire team of stewards and programme sellers and reemploy only those who "reflect the diversity of contemporary audiences". The rest of the paper deals with "diversifying product mix" or "enhancing front line services".

Meanwhile the centre's director, Nicholas "Abominable" Snowman, confidently asserts that a further £45 million of taxpayers' money should be set aside from the millennium fund to redevelop the South Bank.

'Lunchtime O'Boulez'


the Human animal
IF WE STUDY THE BEHAVIOURAL PATTERN OF THE SECRETIVE GREY TRIBE OF WESTMINSTER...
WE SEE THAT IF YOU PROVE YOURSELF AN EMBARRASSMENT...
CHELSEA
OR AN INCOMPETENT...
?
YOU ARE NOT FIT TO LOOK AFTER OUR HERITAGE...
ONLY TO APPOINT THE PEOPLE WHO DO..
Ken Pyne

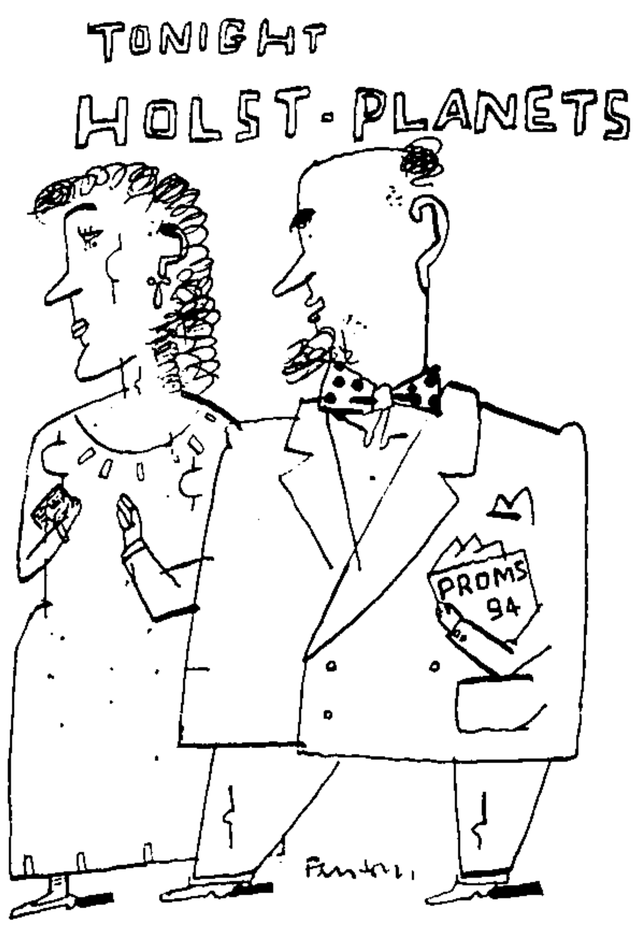
I-BSkyB

Alan Sugar, the Tottenham chairman, initially said nothing as he drove away in his blue Rolls-Royce. Presumably, with the Sky satellite dishes still selling, he will not have to pawn that motor on this account.

The Times

CONTRIBUTOR: Paul Spart.

An occasional column for which readers are invited to submit Sky-plugs masquerading as news items in Murdoch papers. The usual £10 will be paid.



"I thought the comet completely ruined Jupiter"

LEGAL NEWS

THE plagiarism suit against Julie Burchill and the *Sunday Times Magazine* over her profile of pop singer Steven Morrissey continues.

Omnibus Press, which published Johnny Rogan's biography of Morrissey, *Morrissey and Marr, The Severed Alliance*, has threatened the *ST* with a copyright claim in respect of vast amounts of material Burchill borrowed from the book without acknowledgement.

The paper's legal department was authorised to offer £25,000 in settlement, but Omnibus's wily solicitor, the veteran Oscar Beuselinck, has advised it to hold out for more.

SPARTS & SPARTPERSONS

THE Socialist Workers' Party appears to have overstated the threat of rampant fascism in south Wales recently.

When the Spartists called an Anti-Nazi League protest against the British National Party in Barry earlier this year, hundreds of well-meaning people turned out to oppose the fascist hordes and the demo was well covered by local press and TV.

When the BNP didn't even show up, the SWP claimed an historic victory in frightening off the fascists and stopping them from peddling their Nazi propaganda on the streets of Britain.

When the SWP called another demo a month later outside the railway station in Pontypridd, the BNP again failed to turn up. But at least there were a couple of hundred anti-fascists on hand to listen to the SWP hacks selling their paper, recruiting members... and arguing that the SWP was stopping the BNP from peddling its Nazi propaganda on the streets of Britain etc.

Next the SWP mobilised for an anti-fascist demo against the BNP in Merthyr Tydfil at 6pm on a Saturday evening, again outside the railway station. Once again local anti-fascists turned up to be met by screaming hordes of, er, Sparts.

HACKWATCH: Mariella Frostrup

FOR several months puzzled newspaper readers throughout the land have been asking themselves the same question: who — or what — is Mariella Frostrup?

Well, she worked for a PR agency in the pop business for a few years. Then she presented a video-review programme on local television that was transmitted in the middle of the night. Now she hosts a film-review show that goes out slightly — but only slightly — earlier. She featured briefly in the gossip columns when she was seen walking out with the former husband of Anneka Rice. She has blonde hair. And, er, that's it.

Except that, for no obvious reason, she has been hired as the *Sunday Times*'s main commentator on current affairs. Under Andrew Neill, the *Sunday Times* was always happy to provide a home for bimbo wannabes with few brain-cells but glamorous picture bylines. It is a tradition that his successor is clearly eager to maintain. Here is a summary of her wit and wisdom so far:

10 April: "Peter McKay is on holiday," the *Sunday Times* informs its grateful readers. And so the unknown Frostrup is given a trial run as his holiday replacement. "I am convinced we are becoming a nation addicted to trivia," she observes crossly. "Rather than addressing the very real problems we face — social decline, degenerating education standards, burgeoning violence and a government that seems oblivious to the havoc it has wrought — our attention appears instead to be riveted by other people's shopping habits." Clearly, we can expect no such celebrity trivia from Mariella. Instead, she regales us with the important news that she recently dined at the Groucho Club "with Richard Branson and his charming wife, Joan". She also writes of her yearning to travel on Concorde: "I want to be sitting next to Donald Trump or Joan Collins when I finally muster the fare."

22 May: After Mariella's dazzling debut, Peter McKay has been dropped to allow her to appear in his space on the home news pages every week. She kicks off by revealing "a guilty secret: I am a pill hoarder. My bathroom closet is bursting with half-finished courses of tablets". Having got that off her chest, she turns an incredulous eye on the fuss provoked by a commercial that showed a woman soaping her breasts. "Surely," she argues, perceptively as ever, "the nipple is a part of the anatomy we are extremely well acquainted with."

29 May: Only a few weeks after complaining that the press ignores serious issues, she now grumbles that the papers are full of articles about "single-parent families, rising crime, the burgeoning criminal underclass". The solution to these tiresome problems, she explains impatiently, is simple: we must "focus our attention on developing long-term policies to create a better society for all". Of course! Why didn't anyone think of it before?

5 June: John Major's suggestion that beggars are criminal ne'er-do-wells does not meet with Mariella's approval. "There will always be a rogue element who take advantage of the generosity of others," she opines judiciously, "but let us not forget the vast majority of homeless people whose meagre dream is for a roof over their heads and a job so they can pay their way." While in this pensive mood, she has no inclination to salivate over the case of Alan Clark and Valerie Harkess. "Frankly," she explains, "I'm tired of reading about other people's sex lives." Presumably this cannot be the same Mariella Frostrup who on 22 May wrote about the office love-affairs of staff at the Child Support Agency, noting that "the sexual shenanigans at the CSA make gripping reading".

12 June: Since she hates "the ghastly word celebrity", Mariella is furious that the *Evening Standard* has described her as a "celebrity columnist" who has no obvious qualification for her present job apart from her fame as a minor bimbo-about-town. "I guess eight years in PR and the last four as a late-night film reviewer don't qualify me to write a national newspaper column," she comments sarcastically. (Well, no, since you ask.) In fact, she says, she never has time to hang out with famous people since she spends every day toiling at her word processor and every evening watching videos at home "for my late-night film programme". How odd, then, that another item in today's column begins: "I have just returned from a week stomping the hills around Loch Earn on the invitation of my friends Jim Kerr [lead singer of Simple Minds] and his wife Patsy Kensit."

19 June: With little else to write about, Frostrup returns to the ever-fascinating subject of... herself. "My piece last Sunday regarding my perceived 'celebrity status'... was met with a deluge of supportive letters." She was particularly touched by a letter from Mr Ray Tomany, who "fears that my detractors are suffering from the male equivalent of penis envy". Meanwhile, to confirm that she is a limelight-shunning homebody, Mariella reveals that she was a guest at last week's Stella Artois men's tennis final, where "I was thrilled to find that my seat was close enough to be able to see up Pete Sampras's baggy and heavily criticised shorts should he tumble during an energetic rally." As she says, in best Glenda Slagg style: "There's no doubt that tennis ain't the game it used to be!"

3 July: "I'm reluctant," Mariella writes, "to bore my readers with the details of yet another article about me..." She then proceeds to do just that, whingeing about a feature in the *Daily Mail*.

10 July: "I have always suspected that there exist two types of celebrities. Those who will unashamedly do anything in order to achieve publicity and those who can't bear to admit their desire for attention but crave it none the less." Jack Nicholson belongs in the former category, she thinks, and Richard Gere in the latter. But which type is Mariella Frostrup? Since she keeps assuring us that she isn't a celebrity, the question, naturally, does not arise. Meanwhile, belatedly remembering her previous commitment to avoid trivia, she offers us her profound thoughts on religious education: "I believe only good can come from a broader understanding of our fellow human beings and the opportunity to recognise and embrace our religious differences." How true.

17 July: Bill Clinton, visiting Berlin, has delivered a speech about freedom and the future. Mariella has no time for such platitudinous sentiments: she thinks his words "an example of specious comment at its worst". Unlike her own weekly vapourings, presumably. "Good news for the girls as penis enlargement operations finally arrive on these shores," she gushes elsewhere in today's column.

24 July: "Last Monday night," Mariella boasts, "I presented the *Flintstones* premiere on ITV." Well done! Turning to John Major's reshuffle, she expresses her fear that the promotion of Jeremy Hanley and Michael Dobbs may mean that we are falling victim to the "ghastly trend" of giving people jobs merely because of their "celebrity status and telegenic qualities". Perish the thought.

JUST FANCY THAT

Immigrants and faggots
They make no sense to me.
They come to our country
And think they'll do as they please.

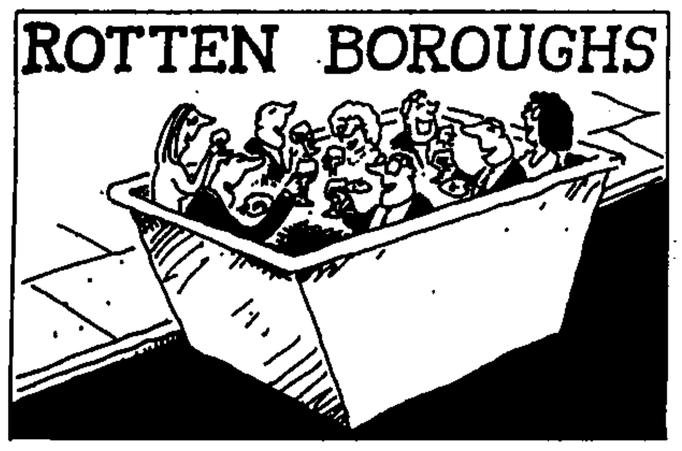
No, not a verse by Sir H. Gussett for a summer poetry competition in the *Daily Telegraph*, but lines from the song *One in a Million* by Guns 'n' Roses, the band much favoured by Labour's new leader Tony Blair.

MUSICAL NOTE: The song is to be found on the album *Lies*.

BIRTSPEAK

Network Television objectives for 1994

2.5. Implement the recommendations of the Production Efficiency Study and ensure that all areas make maximum use of its ideas through wide communication and the extension of benchmarking to genres not in the original study.



BIRMINGHAM

CHUCKING good money after bad has never worried the city's Labour leaders — but they have surpassed themselves with Trevor Hines.

Two years ago he joined the council as number two in its £2.5 million publicity department. He had a five-year contract, £40,000 a year and £20,000 in relocation expenses. Now, however, the city has found him him "surplus to requirements" and has sacked him with three years of his contract still to run. He went happily thanks to a £56,000 handshake.

HATS OFF to Michael Lyons, £105,000-a-year chief executive of Birmingham city council. Just two weeks into his new job and he is off on holiday for the whole of August.

The council could have saved his £8,000 holiday pay if Labour leader Theresa Stewart had asked Lyons to start work on 1 September instead. But no doubt she had good reason for bringing forward his appointment: she knows what a terribly talented chap he is from Lyons' former incarnation as a Labour councillor in the city when the pair were close colleagues.

MURKEYSIDE

THOSE who follow the business activities of Murkeyside entrepreneur Henry "H" Williams were fascinated by a meeting of Knowsley council's licensing committee earlier this month.

Ferraris nightclub in Huyton — the main front for his business activities — was applying for a licence renewal, and local Knackers had been obliged to mention certain incidents that had taken place last year at or immediately outside the club. They included fighting, assault, wounding and breaches of the licensing laws.

Though serious, incidents at Ferraris on 2 February this year were even stranger. Assistant superintendent Richard Booth listed them in a letter on 9 February. He wrote: "Alleged assault on owner of club (Williams) at premises — denied by staff and solicitor at premises on arrival of police. Owner believed to have received treatment at Broadgreen Hospital at 1400 hours that day for facial fractures — full details refused — six 'bouncers' guarding him in ward — refused to speak to police. Two males arrested and bailed in connection with this."

One of the bouncers, or "security operatives" as "H" prefers to call them, has just written a book for which Williams says he will stump up £2 million to turn into a film. Perhaps his minders should spend less time on literary endeavours and more time, er, "minding" their boss from his alleged assailants.

PS: Astonishingly, the Booth letter was completely contradicted by one from his boss at Huyton police station, superintendent K.A. Wilkinson. The latter wrote to Knowsley council on 2 June, more or less recommending that the Ferraris licence be renewed and effectively dismissing the previous police report. He said he was "satisfied that any incidents during this period are not exceptional and certainly not items for concern". Henry "H" Williams, whose favourite catchphrase is "no one will stand in my way", got his renewal.

TOWER HAMLETS

MORE trouble at Petticoat Lane, the world famous Cockney market, where trader Terry Smith has had his licence reduced from six days a week to two.

A panel heard that Mr Smith had broken council rules by regularly vacating his stall. He, however, claims that he was marked down absent every time he went to the lavatory. The council also alleged that he had allowed his mother to run the stall — but she died two years previously.

Why has Tower Hamlets got it in for Mr Smith? An inquiry into market corruption headed by John Hendy QC found that Liberal councillors had tried to change the market rules to give Smith's pitch to Liberal councillor Betty Wright (recently defeated at the council elections).

The report urged the council to allow Smith to trade without harassment but councillors took no notice and have now had their revenge. And should appear trading at Pitch 72 this July opposite Smith? None other than Betty Wright.

LAMBETH

THE Spartists on Lambeth Council who ran a vociferous anti-Poll Tax campaign can congratulate themselves on a spectacular double cock-up.

Not only did mass non-payment cost the impoverished borough millions in desperately-needed revenue — it also looks like depriving a Labour MP of his seat. Lambeth urged residents not to register to vote, in order to avoid the tax. So successful was this campaign that only 82 per cent of the electorate bothered to register. Result: the Boundary Commission decrees that, because of the declining roll, the area must forfeit one of its four Parliamentary constituencies. So, farewell then John Fraser, MP for the Labour stronghold of Norwood for 28 years.

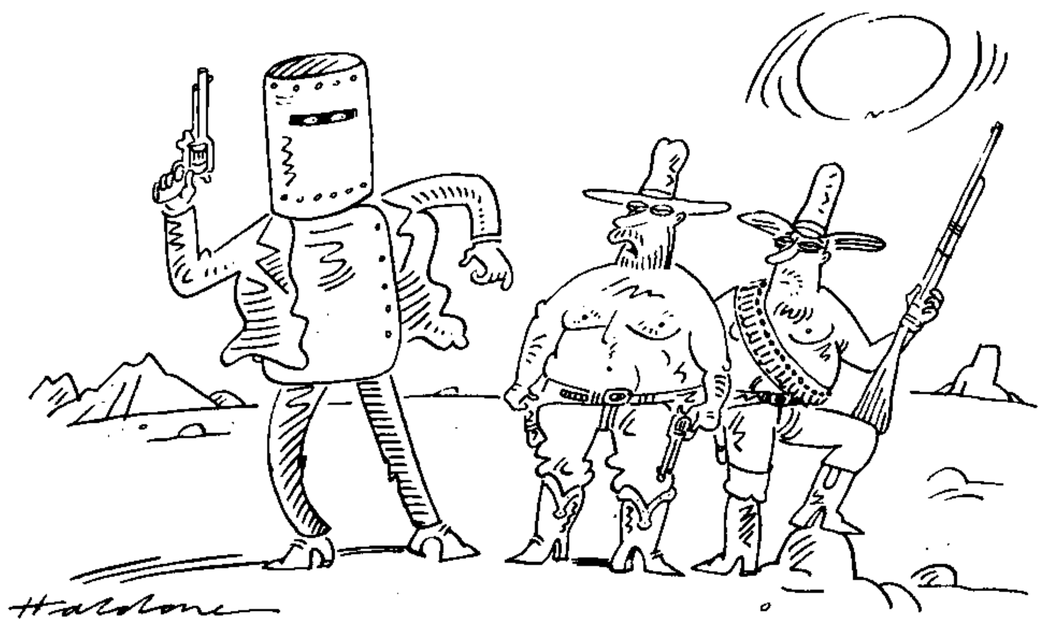
GAS NEWS

WHEN Clare Spottiswoode was made boss of Ofgas, the gas regulator, the first thing her new office did was to send her away to learn about, er, gas. She went on a course run by a company part-owned by her uncle, David Spottiswoode, and Ofgas paid her fees.

While the method of her appointment attracted much unfavourable conjecture in the media, a deafening silence has followed the departure of her director of strategic services, Greg McGregor.

He is the son of Lord McGregor, chairman of the Press Complaints Commission, and everyone in the gas world believes he was suspected by Ms Spottiswoode of having been the source of unhelpful rumours about her. Though his departure has been widely known, newspapers, perhaps anxious about his father's position, have shied away from discussing the matter.

McGregor was a civil servant on secondment from the department of trade and industry. He left in such a hurry that Ofgas had no one available to replace him as Spottiswoode's right-hand man. The official Ofgas spokesman gave a formal denial that his departure was linked to the rumours and leaks.



"I wish you'd never shown Ned that article on skin cancer"

"It's water. We're rich!"

WATER NEWS

"DRINKING water quality continues to improve," trumpets Yorkshire Water in its annual report on water quality. Its tests show that the number of tap water samples failing to meet the industry's regulations fell from 0.6 percent in 1992 to 0.5 percent in 1993.

However, a reading of the small print reveals that in no fewer that five major areas — lead, iron, pesticides, trihalomethanes, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons — water quality was actually *worse* than a year before. The report also reveals that on nearly 70 occasions last year the highly profitable company had to apply to have water supply regulations "relaxed" because it was even failing to meet less than onerous minimum standards.

If the quality of drinking water really is improving, it is doing so at a snail's pace compared to the salary of Yorkshire Water chairman Sir Gordon Jones (up from £58,000 pre-privatisation to £156,00 now) and dividends paid to shareholders (up by 48 percent since 1990).

BRITISH Waterways, poor relation to the privatised water board monopolies, is increasingly desperate to boost its revenue.

Its latest bad idea is to overstock canal reservoirs with fish, making them so easy to catch that anglers clamour to buy licences. Unfortunately other species — namely cormorants and herons — also like the easy fishing, much to the chagrin of British Waterways.

Herons have nested on at island at Gailey Pool in Staffordshire for many years. They are meant to be a protected species, but that didn't stop British Waterways' regional manager Keith Fisher (*sic*) sending in a gang to chop down the trees, bringing down the nests and dozens of chicks, all of whom died.

Mr Fisher claimed he was unaware of the nests — difficult given their immense size — and the RSPB is considering prosecution. But Mr Fisher must know that any fine will be a drop in the ocean, as it were, compared to the income earned from anglers.

This pattern is repeated across the country; the ministry of agriculture having received more than 25 applications to shoot cormorants on reservoirs. That is nearly four times the number received last year — and most are from British Waterways.

EVERY rain cloud has a silver lining — except in that part of the Severn Trent water authority area where a hosepipe ban has just come into force.

The ban is in the western half of the area, which is served by the Severn watershed. This is a bit tough on locals there as the area has the highest rainfall: 50 percent more, in fact, in the mountains to the west, including Montgomeryshire.

Montgomeryshire of course is in Wales but is the only part of the country not to be covered by Welsh Water. This anomaly dates back to the formation of the water authorities in 1974 when the area was handed over to an English region because English councils, decades ago, had built the huge reservoirs of Vyrnwy in the north and Clywedog in the south, to supply the Midlands.

The rain-drenched but water-starved consumers of Montgomeryshire, who are blessed with the largest concentration of reservoirs in England and Wales, must wonder why they face a hosepipe ban while people in the Midlands, who get their water from flooded Welsh valleys, do not. Perhaps Severn Trent shareholders (profits up to £281 million this year) have an answer.

DOING THE ROUNDS

ALL IS not well at London's UCL hospitals trust. Student nurses, domestics and porters living in staff residences have been promised a 22 percent rent rise.

Director of resources Henry Stanley (salary: £40,000-plus) told a meeting of nurses (salary: £5,075) that the rise was justified to help UCLHT out of its "financial difficulties".

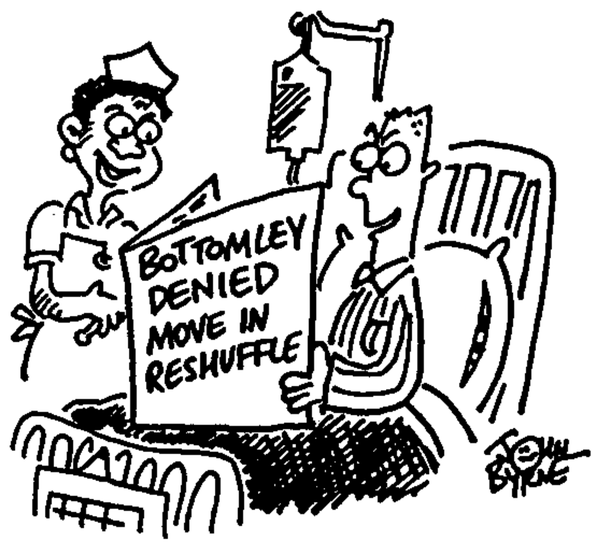
Dedicated staff who live a long way from the hospital offered to stay in grim staff residences the night before the rail strikes to ensure they reached work on time. They were rewarded with a £12 a night charge from district housing manager Christine Petch.

UCLHT has, however, raised enough to send selected managers away on "bonding" sessions to venues such as Kensington's ritzy Harrington Hall hotel. General manager Sandra Knowles and clinical services manager Lisa Rand have much enjoyed these jaunts.

The closure of the UCLHT main building in August 1993 had led to a chronic shortage of emergency medical beds, with outlying patients in surgical beds causing cancellations of routine admissions. However, the building has been rented out as a set for *Hercule Poirot*. Patients attending the sexually transmitted disease unit were a tad alarmed to find a production team filming their entrance into the hospital.

● LAST September a 14-year-old Glasgow schoolgirl, Lorraine McGalliard, complained of stomach pain. Ten days later she died in intensive care from a ruptured ovarian cyst. In between times she was seen by five GPs and five hospital doctors at **Stobhill hospital**, was discharged with a diagnosis of urinary tract infection, was told that she couldn't see a gynaecologist for two weeks and was denied an urgent scan because it was a weekend.

● DAVID Reilly and John Meyrich Thomas, consultant surgeons at the financially challenged **Watford general hospital**, have written to local



"She's still on the waiting list"

GPs warning them that they will no longer accept urgent cases because "they would have to wait an unacceptably long time for surgery." Since this embarrassing disclosure, WGH has found enough money to fund an emergency theatre.

● IAN SEMPLE, the macho chief executive of **Croydon's Lifecare trust**, has been trying to attract patients with learning difficulties from the doomed **Queen Elizabeth hospital** in **Banstead** to his "Lifecare Homes". Mr Semple spent two hours telling relatives how his service is much better than that at **Surrey Heartlands trust**, and followed up the meeting with unsolicited phone calls from members of his team. Quite how he got hold of their home numbers is unclear. As one relative put it: "It was frightening. Has the NHS really come to this?"

● STEPHEN EAMES, much-loved chief executive of **Havering Hospitals** (*Eyes passim*), is facing a £9 million shortfall. In a memo to consultants he makes 65 suggestions for recouping the loss, eg "reduce out-patient follow up slots to create GP fundholder space, expand screening programmes for GP fundholders and private patients, increase income from and dispose of staff accommodation, collaborate with the private sector and GP fundholders to attract investment, establish new consultant posts financed by GP fundholders and establish private inpatient facilities." Mr Eames is evidently a man of vision and true to the ethos of the NHS.

● A WOMAN whose baby son died in strange circumstances at **Hackney's Queen Elizabeth Hospital for Children** waited eight months for an explanation, only to be billed for the medical notes. A 90-year-old woman with a fractured pelvis waited six hours for an ambulance at **Gwynedd's Ysbyty hospital** because staff didn't register the request. And a man discharged from **Stirling Royal Infirmary** after a heart attack had to wait five months for an echo-cardiogram and another three months before he was offered heart surgery at **Edinburgh's Western General**. He died two months later, without having been put on the waiting list. As Mrs Bottomley put it: "This simply isn't good enough".

● AT **Manchester Royal Infirmary** Louis Hughes, a 69-year-old patient who was reported missing after attending a student teaching session, was subsequently found dead in a disused ward. His son John said: "This is diabolical. I was told 'categorically' that my father wasn't there. In fact, he was left lying in a stinking toilet for 36 hours."

EMBARRASSING FACTS

LAST November Welsh secretary John Redwood promised to stem the tide of "men in grey suits" taking over the health service. Six months later the number of senior NHS managers in Wales had risen by 6.5 percent to 1,095.

Solihull health authority has used charitable donations to build up a £1 million shares portfolio, including investments in such health inspiring companies as Tate & Lyle PLC and Cadbury Schweppes PLC.

York GP Dr Donald Patterson has been refused reimbursement for his practice computer by **North Yorkshire FHSA** because he isn't a fundholder. Fundholding GPs in the region automatically receive a 70 percent reimbursement.

M.D.

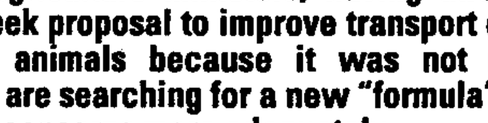
DOWN ON THE FARM

EC agriculture ministers, having thrown out a Greek proposal to improve transport conditions for animals because it was not restrictive enough, are searching for a new "formula" to reflect welfare concerns more adequately.

They would do well to learn from the experience of a small but important sector of the UK livestock industry burdened with a another "formula" introduced by the Welfare of Animals during Transport Order 1992.

This requires animals and poultry to be provided with food and water during their journeys, and rested, fed and watered after 15 hours. Poultry, however, do not have to be provided with feed and water for journeys of less than 12 hours. The trouble is that this "formula" does not improve conditions for poultry sent in small lots by specialist breeders and rearers via commercial carriers.

Before the 12-hour restriction, these birds travelled overnight, minimising stress by ensuring they travelled when they least needed food and water. However, the mechanics of overnight transport meant that delivery — even over relatively short distances — could not be guaranteed within 12 hours. Since it is impractical to give water to birds in transit, they must now be loaded either at first light or the night before so that they can start and complete their journeys during the working day. In so doing, they travel during the heat of the day when they most need food and water — a perfect recipe for maximising stress.



AFTER initially supporting the Greek proposal, outgoing agriculture minister Gillian Shephard changed her mind and agreed that tougher laws were needed. No doubt she was influenced by the massive public (ie voter) concern on these issues, but it remains to be seen if her ministry, the much-loved Maffia, will support her aims under its new boss, William Waldegrave.

The Maffia's attitude to animal welfare can be judged by its extraordinary failure earlier this month to nail a certain R.E. Mills, who was fined £4,200 last October by Dover magistrates for making false declarations that sheep had been fed and watered in transit across Europe between May and September 1991.

Mills, who has been exporting live animals since the late 60s through an ever-changing variety of companies, came to public notice in February 1992 when BBC Radio 4 broadcast harrowing details of his role in exporting 700 British sheep to Pascara in south Italy. They suffered an uninterrupted journey of 47 hours with no food or water.

His prosecution for this and other dubious practices identified Mills as a less than honourable member of the export fraternity. And when he appealed against his current fine to Maidstone crown court, one might have expected the Maffia to have contested the appeal rigorously. But the ministry failed to put up its key witness and also failed to convince the judge there were good reasons for his absence. By default Mills won his appeal, leaving him free to carry on his questionable trade, apparently with the blessing of the Maffia, which continues to consult him on animal welfare matters.

IN ANOTHER recent cock-up, the Maffia managed to demolish completely the milk quota transfer system which has hitherto been efficiently managed by the soon-to-be-disbanded Milk Marketing Board (MMB).

In anticipation of the demise of the MMB in November, the Maffia transferred this work to the Intervention Board, funding a new computer system and taking on 30 extra staff. But since 1 April when the new arrangements started the board has failed to get its computer system working and has 4,000 quota transfers stacked up.

Harassed staff have resorted to "manual systems", processing applications at a snail's pace. Clearing the backlog has not been made easier by forms which are so incomprehensible many farmers have been unable to fill them in correctly, necessitating numerous returns for correction. A new form design is "planned".

The irony is that the MMB had offered its services to the Maffia to organise the new system and train staff. The offer was firmly rejected, despite previous ministry cock-ups in introducing computer systems (*Eye* 840) making the current chaos inevitable. Yet another example of the agriculture industry being in "a safe pair of hands".

'New Muckspreader'

Old Macdonald

ALBERT

I SEE THE BÜRGERMEISTER FROM OUR TWIN VILLAGE IN GERMANYS OVER GEORGE.
AYE, HES HERE TO PROMOTE CLOSER TIES AN' UNDERSTANDIN' BETWEEN OUR TWO COMMUNITIES! SO THEYRE ARRANGIN' AN EXCHANGE FOR SOME OF THE LOCAL YOUNGSTERS...
..THEIRS ARE GETTIN' MAD COW AN' OURS ARE GETTIN' RABIES.

Letters

Ferry interesting

Sir,

I read with some interest the letter you published about Tim Rathbone's involvement with Eurotunnel (15 July).

Whatever Mr Rathbone, or the Liberal Democrats, or the Newhaven ferry operators have said to the local press on this issue, it has to be remembered that our member of Parliament is paid as a parliamentary consultant to further the interests of Eurotunnel.

There is a question which ought to be asked next, and indeed answered (though I suspect it never will be). Is Mr Rathbone a parliamentary consultant for Eurotunnel precisely because there is a potentially important ferry port in his constituency?

Yours faithfully,
IAN GARNER,
Lewes, East Sussex.

No track with safety

Sir,

Your Rail News column (15 July) has trivialised Railtrack's attempt to improve track safety.

When trains are running the trackside is as dangerous as a busy road. Railtrack is committed to reducing the number of trackside injuries and fatalities and is looking at the option of doing all work when lines are closed.

The safety of staff, passengers and the public is our prime concern. While the railway has a good record of passenger safety there are still too many deaths and injuries to trackside staff. Our attempts to make it a safer place to work are not a cost cutting exercise.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID RAYNER,
Director, Safety & Standards, Railtrack.

Free loaners

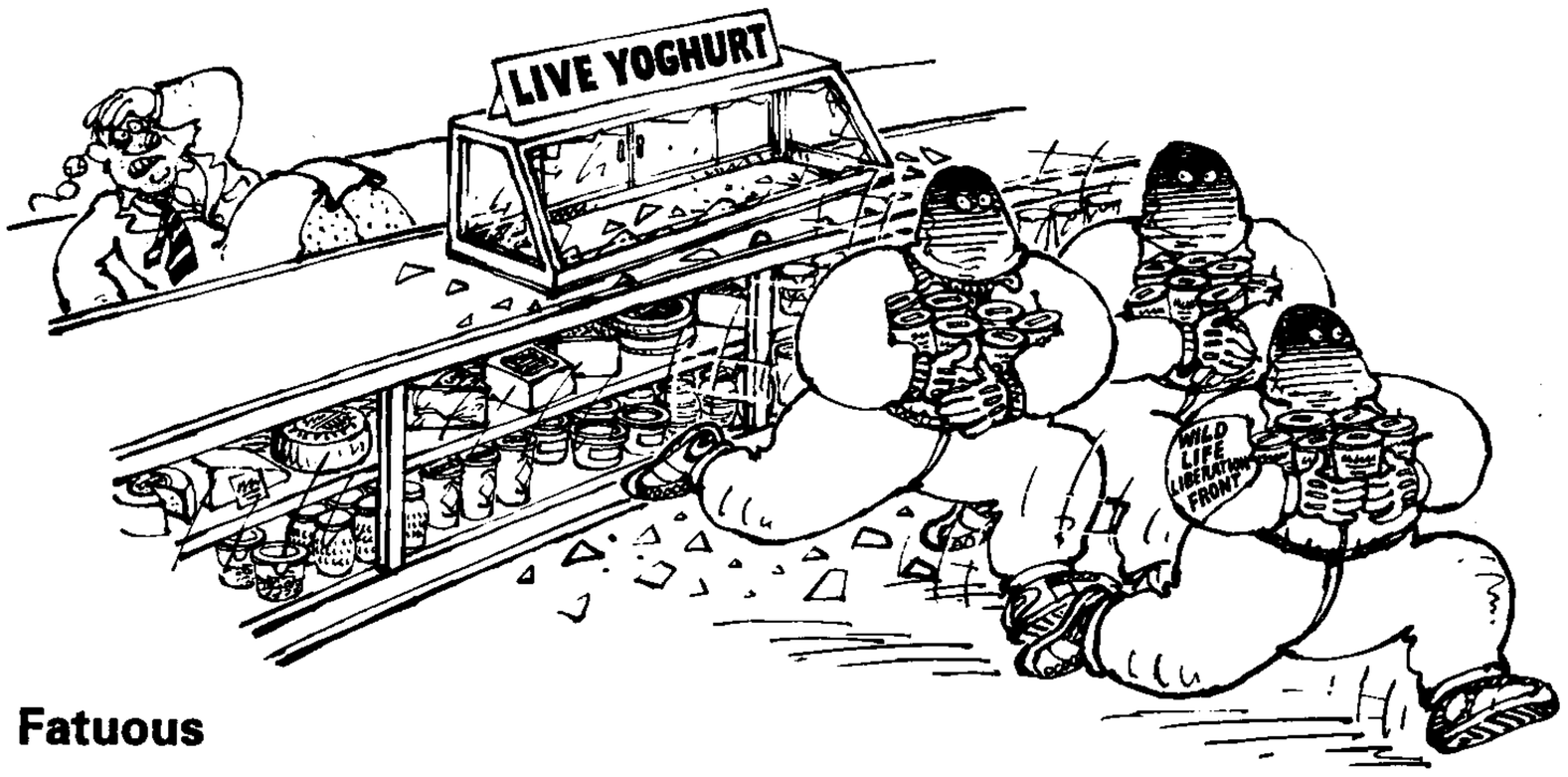
Sir,

Thank you for the tiniest mention you gave my company last week in your Inferiors article (EYE 848). Sadly, we have never supplied Eve Pollard with any free merchandise in return for editorial favours. I naively prefer to think that our products are written about because they are good.

Of course, were you able to give us any more coverage, I should be delighted to come and talk to you about our "permanent loan" scheme for furnishing editors' offices/homes/yachts with our excellent range of chandeliers, mirrors, tables, etc, etc.

Yours faithfully,
KEVIN McCLOUD,
McCloud & Co, London SW6.

THE ANIMAL LIBERATION FRONT STRIKES AGAIN



McLACHLAN

Fatuous

Sir,

With reference to Couch Potato's brilliantly accurate slaying of BBC1's pisspoor HIT THE ROAD *(EYE 850) I would like to make a few comments.*

The Potato refers to team captain Jonathan Coleman solely as a fat Australian who makes jokes about being fat and Australian. I just wonder why this reference to Mr Coleman was permitted by your otherwise admirable editor, for a couple of reasons.

Firstly, Mr Coleman is the co-presenter of RUSS AND JONO'S BREAKFAST EXPERIENCE *on Virgin 1215AM. Okay, so the programme title is crap but the show itself was described as "entertaining" by your media correspondent last year within a piece about gormless Piers Morgan who, in his previous role as the* SUN*'s showbiz "columnist", secured a role in the show following his brown-nosing of Mr Branson's DJs and his oh-so shit criticisms of their Radio 1 counterparts. This of course happened after he was axed from the Jakki Brambles show following her sensible decision to piss off permanently to the States, much to the relief of the listeners.*

Secondly, the EXPERIENCE *is also a programme on which Mr Hislop himself has recently featured, promoting the* EYE*'s caption competition involving Messrs Branson and Coleman and Mr Coleman's presenting partner, Russ Williams. I wonder if the* EYE *has now taken the view that Mr Coleman's a bit of all right when he is helping to promote the publication on the UK's fastest growing radio station, which is nicking all of Radio 1's tired listeners, but when it is all over, he is simply a fat Australian who no one gives a toss about?*

Yes, he is fat. Yes, he is Australian. But he is also funny and an excellent broadcaster, although admittedly he shouldn't have touched HIT THE ROAD *with a disinfected bargepole. But if he lost five stone and affected an English accent, would you lay off him then?*

Yours faithfully,
MATT RUDD,
Huddersfield, W Yorkshire.

Waiting room

Sir,

Redbridge and Waltham Forest health authority has not suspended routine surgery as reported in Doing the Rounds (15 July).

This health authority is funding local hospitals to provide non-urgent treatment within 18 months of a person being placed on a waiting list, and this is guaranteed. In fact, most people are seen much sooner than this, currently local hospitals are treating over 65 percent of people within three months, and over 90 percent within 12 months.

Yours faithfully,
GEOFFREY SHEPHERD,
Chief Executive, Redbridge and Waltham Forest HA.

Lookalike

Holdsworth

Hockney

Sir,

Holdsworth and Hockney; surely these two Northern pranksters are related?

Yours,
BENJAMIN MEE,
London, SE22.

HUSBAND
Get in! There's someone in there!
Let me out. Im not sharin' a cell with a drunken down and out!!
Er.. nothin' personal you understand Dad

Violent attack

Sir,

So, loyalist killers are far less likely to be caught than their republican counterparts (EYE 849)? What nonsense.

In recent years convictions of loyalist terrorists has been almost double that of republicans. As for the absurd comment that Sinn Fein/IRA are about to quit violence, only last year a newly elected Sinn Fein councillor said, and I quote: "The people who voted for Sinn Fein knew they were voting for violence", whilst over in the good old US of A a touring "Sinn Feiner" told the press that the IRA were morally justified in killing policemen, judges and probably security base cleaners.

Yours etc,
IAN JOHNSTON,
Belfast.

I-SPY

Submitted by Nicholas Booker, Stephen McGairl. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

SIR—Yesterday was my 48th birthday. What a splendid present you gave me with your price reduction (June 23).

Thank you. Having stuck with you through "thick and thin" it is extremely satisfying to have my loyalty rewarded this way. I hope your objectives are achieved.

NICK WEALL
Letter to Daily Telegraph

Submitted by C.H. Paul.

£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

"There goes Lady Windermere's Fan..."

Z-z-z-z-zzzz

Sir,

What is a film "premiere" on television? Unfortunately, this is not as simple as it seems. Since the arrival of satellite film channels, the great majority of films shown on terrestrial television are no longer true "premieres" — so they become "network television premieres" or even "channel premieres" when a film switches from one terrestrial channel to another.

Satellite television viewers know that films licensed by Sky are shown on average 12 times in 12 months, at different times, on different days of the week, at different points in the year, so that subscribers are not tied down to viewing a single screening. So we always identify the first screening of any film we license — including TV movies, and the older and classic titles licensed for Sky Movies Gold and for off-peak transmission on the other film channels.

In each of May and June (the months you picked out) Sky broadcast nearly 400 different films. 62 of these were brand-new first-runs (including major theatrical releases like CHAPLIN, THE BODYGUARD, SISTER ACT, LAST OF THE MOHICANS *and* STRICTLY BALLROOM**). 57 were library films licensed for the first time by Sky Movies or The Movie Channel. 42 were library films licensed by Sky for the first time for Sky Movies Gold.*

Sky subscribers know perfectly well what we mean when we describe a library film as a channel "premiere". They know that 95 percent of the most successful films will receive their "premiere" on Sky. They know that 90 percent of terrestrial channel "premieres" will have been seen first on Sky. What's your problem?

Yours faithfully,
DAVID ELSTEIN,
Head of Programming, Sky.

Latin lovers

Guys, guys,

Let's get this in perspective. Brian Conley used THREE of my gags in his entire series. Nuptials are not on the cards.

Si post fata venit gloria non propero.

GARRY BUSHELL,
The Sun.

Time warp

Sir,

Unless there's a hitherto undisclosed international date line between 6 Carlisle Street and my home in Marlow, I fail to understand how I was able to read the result of your "Grand Summer Photo Bubble Competition" when I collected EYE *850 on 14 July when the closing date was announced in* EYE *849 as 15 July.*

I think we should be told — and is HM government involved?

Yours faithfully, if confused,
PETER KEMP,
Marlow Bottom, Bucks.

● ***No. An Error. Ed.***

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"Amin [of Saudi Arabia] has passed the ball more like Idi Amin. And even he'd struggle in this heat, big Idi..."

Commentator, ITV
(Harry Thompson)

"If you closed your eyes you would think it was Maradona."

BOB WILSON, BBC
(Donald McKinnon)

"Stoichkov's had a quiet game, but that's often the hallmark of greatness."

MIKE INGHAM, Radio 5
(Philip Craigie)

"Diego Maradona — a flawed genius who has now become a genius who is flawed."

BOB WILSON, BBC1
(Jeremy Walters)

"If you can lipread, you'll be able to tell from his arm signals that it's broken."

TREVOR FRANCIS, ITV
(Paul Mountford)

Letter from the UN

from Our Own Correspondent

YASUSHI AKASHI, head of the United Nations in Bosnia, is an inventive man who should be able to rationalise the Serb refusal of the "peace plan" into an acceptance.

After all, he was the chap who last week decided that a Serbian artillery-targeting radar could be moved into the exclusion zone around Sarajevo for "humanitarian purposes".

Observers could almost detect his wily hand in Nato's continuing consideration of the French plan, outlined in the *Eye* a month ago, to declare the ethnically cleansed town of Breko a safe area and use air strikes against Bosnian forces trying to retake it.

Faced with his constant duplicity, it is hardly surprising that the locals do not show enthusiasm for his works. But Akashi has an answer.

He wants the press office of UNPROFOR, currently under ex-BBC hack Mike Williams, to be beefed up to 183 staff, presumably because, like the Bellman said in the *Hunting of the Snark*, "What I say 183 times must be true." He has also decided that the UN needs its own radio station to popularise the peace process in what was once Yugoslavia.

Another way of course might be to defeat, catch and punish the people who invaded and killed 250,000 civilians there. But then again, perhaps not.

● THE ambassador of the genocidal Rwandan regime to the UN Security Council is, it seems, only thick skinned and not armour-plated.

As his masters fled to the protective embrace of their French arms suppliers, he let it be known that he would *not* be turning up to take his seat as the council's rotating president.

This will spare Britain's foreign secretary Douglas Hurd the embarrassment of having to shake hands with him when Hurd turns up at the UN in September. But it may prove embarrassing for the French representative since by then the Rwandan ambassador will almost certainly be the representative of the Rwandan Patriotic Front, whose pleas for help against the genocidal regime have been cold shouldered in the corridors of power.

In fact few are without blame. Last week the first armoured personnel carriers arrived in Kigali for the Ghanaian peacekeeping troops — some three months after they were first requested, and months after the murderers had been moved on by the rebels who were, of course, unaided by the United Nations in the process.

One reason for the delay was that the US government charged £6 million to deliver the vehicles to Entebbe in Uganda. In fact there were private companies prepared to fly them directly and immediately into Kigali, but no one in the UN was prepared to risk signing a contract with them in case secretary-general Boutros Boutros Ghali's witchfinder-general, Mohammed Niazi, came after them. It was safer to pay three times as much and let the Rwandans get massacred.

By contrast the French flew the equipment for their Hutu-saving force in Russian Antonovs chartered from SkyLink — the very company that Niazi has been pursuing a vendetta against! The French were there within days of the decision being made — and saved a lot of money by it. Shame about the dead Tutsis in Kigali.

HOM SAP

BY DAVID AUSTIN

I'M ON THE TRAIL OF CLAUDIUS THE CON-MAN.
FRAUD SQUAD
HAVE YOU GOT A CONVICTION?
NOT YET...
.. BUT I'VE GOT A LOVELY LITTLE TIMESHARE IN POMPEII.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

"The police are used to being criticised by the press," a spokesman for the Dartford force told reporters, "but, just for once, admit it. We've got spunk."

An incident unit from Medway, three fire engines, and a police car had all been summoned earlier that evening to the depot of Lynx Express in Dartford: "We had been alerted that a package with a French postmark was leaking gas, and suspected a chemical spillage or an incendiary device. After donning chemical protection suits and breathing equipment, we approached the suspect package, from which gas was now pouring, and prepared to neutralise it. We'd just got started when PC Alan Thornley, who speaks French, arrived on the scene, examined the label, and told us it was actually a bucketful of horse semen, packed in dry ice which was leaking out through the lid. That's a university education for you. I could have sworn it was Semtex." *(Dartford Times, 7/4/94. Spotter — John Woodhead)*

— o —

"After eight years of research, the African condom is finally ready," Mr Stalling Ziba of the Traditional Healers' Association of Zambia told an astonished audience at the Heritage Centre, Lusaka. "Once again, science has come to the rescue of our nation."

Ziba, who is also headmaster of Kanyanga day school in Lundazi, was addressing a conference at the World Decade for Cultural Development exhibition: "The great advantage of my African condom is that it is in powder form, and only needs to be applied once. To treat a man, I tattoo him with my special powder, drawing an eye on the tip of his glans penis, and an ear on his groin. The eye and the ear can see and hear whether a woman has HIV and, if she has, the private parts of the man will be unable to erect. It's as simple and as scientific as that.

"You will find this hard to believe, but the government refuses to give me a grant for my good work, and therefore I must make a nominal charge of 2,500 kwacha for each treatment. But just think. No more will you fumble with little packets in the dark. No more will your manhood stink of rubber for hours. It is money well spent if you ask me." *(Times of Zambia, 20/5/94. Spotter — Dr M. Bush)*

— o —

"There's no denying I've got the greatest mind of the century," Thomas Harvey told an audience at the Wistar Institute, Pennsylvania, "but the trouble is, at my age, I'm afraid of losing it. That's why I keep it in the closet."

Dr Harvey, 81, a pathologist from Lawrence, Kansas, was displaying exhibits from his private collection: "I performed the autopsy on Albert Einstein, and I've kept his brain in formaldehyde ever since. As you can see, I've still got it, but I have to admit Albert's rather gone to pieces of late.

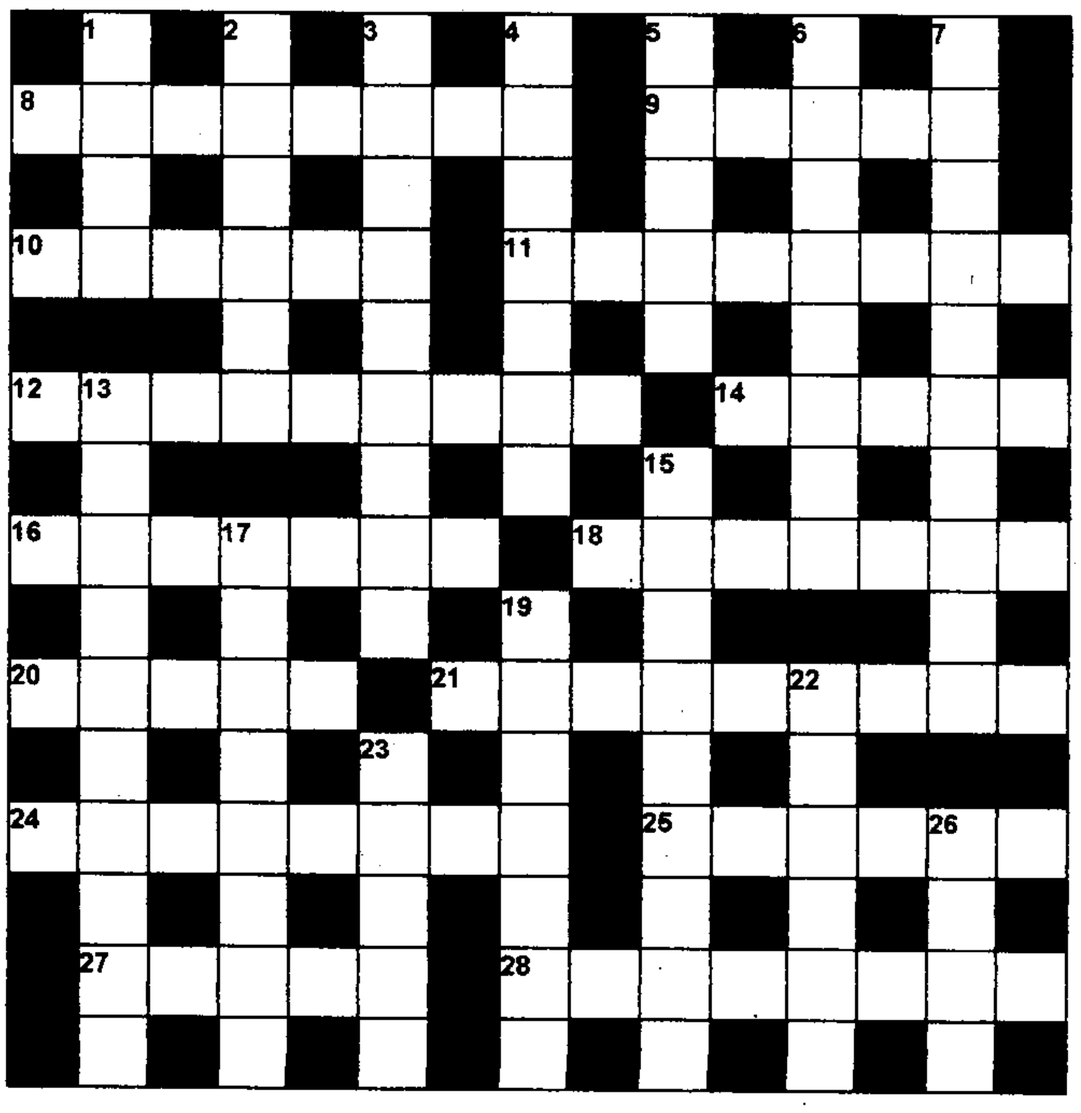
"Now that I've retired, I'm trying to find a good home for it before I die. I had hoped to donate it to the Wistar Institute, to add to your collection of 200 famous brains, but I'd want an assurance that you'd look after it better than you did Walt Whitman's. A lab technician admitted to me earlier that he'd dropped Walt's on the floor a few years back, and had to flush him away with a hose. An ignominious end for America's greatest poet. I shouldn't like Albert to go the same way." (Wall Street Journal, 11/5/94. Spotter — Alex Catalano)

Compiled by

Victor Lewis-Smith

EYE CROSSWORD 7 by Cyclops

£100 Winner EMILY MORRIS



ACROSS

8 Toolbox kid wants scrap (8)
9 (see 1)
10 Heartless Tory bluster from a leader like Thatcher? (6)
11 Monosodium glutamate, for example, is like coke decarbonised (8)
12 (see 18)
14 This MP needs maybe a double one inside to get hard on (5)
16 Stops you from playing bloody joker (3,4)
18/12 Can it be possibly about to get limp? That makes a change for some ministers! (7,9)
20 Norma done over by city type (5)
21 Try to get deceptive slice on balls (9)
24 Rumpus not out of place in parliament (8)
25 Flow-interrupter attached to party nutter! (6)
27 Lowly official, we hear, but a passionate family man (5)
28 The ins and outs of our daily existence? (8)

DOWN

1/9 Vacillating oily brat, neutral at heart? (4,5)
2 Piss while holding pint — get it everywhere (6)
3/22 Rich and famous lush resort (5,4,6)
4 Balls-up of continental cable broadcast (7)
5 Your place or mine? (5)
6 Miss western-style row with one old foe of Thatcher (8)
7 A dick's an interesting and amusing organ! (7,3)
13 Intimate peep amongst our smalls? (3,7)
15 Rave over cat who put squeeze on members (5,4)
17 Rocker mounts lover Norma no longer (8)
19 Policeman with a hunch — a rotten one (4,3)
22 (see 3)
23 Neuter: maybe Yoko's sex (5)
26 Squidgy and foreign — but fast (4)

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 3.8.94 Send entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 6

ACROSS: 7/9 Doing the Rounds 9 (see 7) 10 Snog 11 Third Reich 12 Daily Star 13 Eggs 15 Illegal 17 Ratners 20 Goer 21 Naval base 24 Mortar bomb 25 Foul 26 Delors 27 Fellatio.

DOWN: 1 Town hall 2 Statesman 3 Medical 4 Grade 5 Supergun 6 Edicts 8 Nigel 14 Papal Bull 16 Election 18 Rasputin 19 Layoffs 20 Grocer 22 BAFTA 23 Prost.

The Mail on Sunday

RED BLAIR SETS OUT MARXIST AGENDA

by Our Scaremongering Staff LUNCHTIME O'NOBLAIRMIGHTWIN

MAKE NO mistake! The honeymoon is over! We gave Blair every chance *(2 minutes)*, **but now the gloves are off, as the new face of Trotsky-Leninism, Tony Blair style, is at last revealed.**

Behind the boyish smile there lurks nothing less than the face of evil.

The Mail has acquired a secret document from ourselves that shows what Britain will be like when Kim Il Blair, the Stalinist Commissar, stamps his own brand of despotism on this green and pleasant land.

What it will mean:

- **A new look at Taxes**
- **Rethinking Transport**
- **Making Education a Priority**
- **Doing something about Unemployment**
- **Er...**
- **That's it.**

No wonder we say John Major, whatever his faults, is the man to lead Britain out of the mess he has made and into the next mess *(shurely "Century", Ed)*.

Vote Conservative.

Poetry Corner

In Memoriam II

So. Farewell
Then

The Oldie.

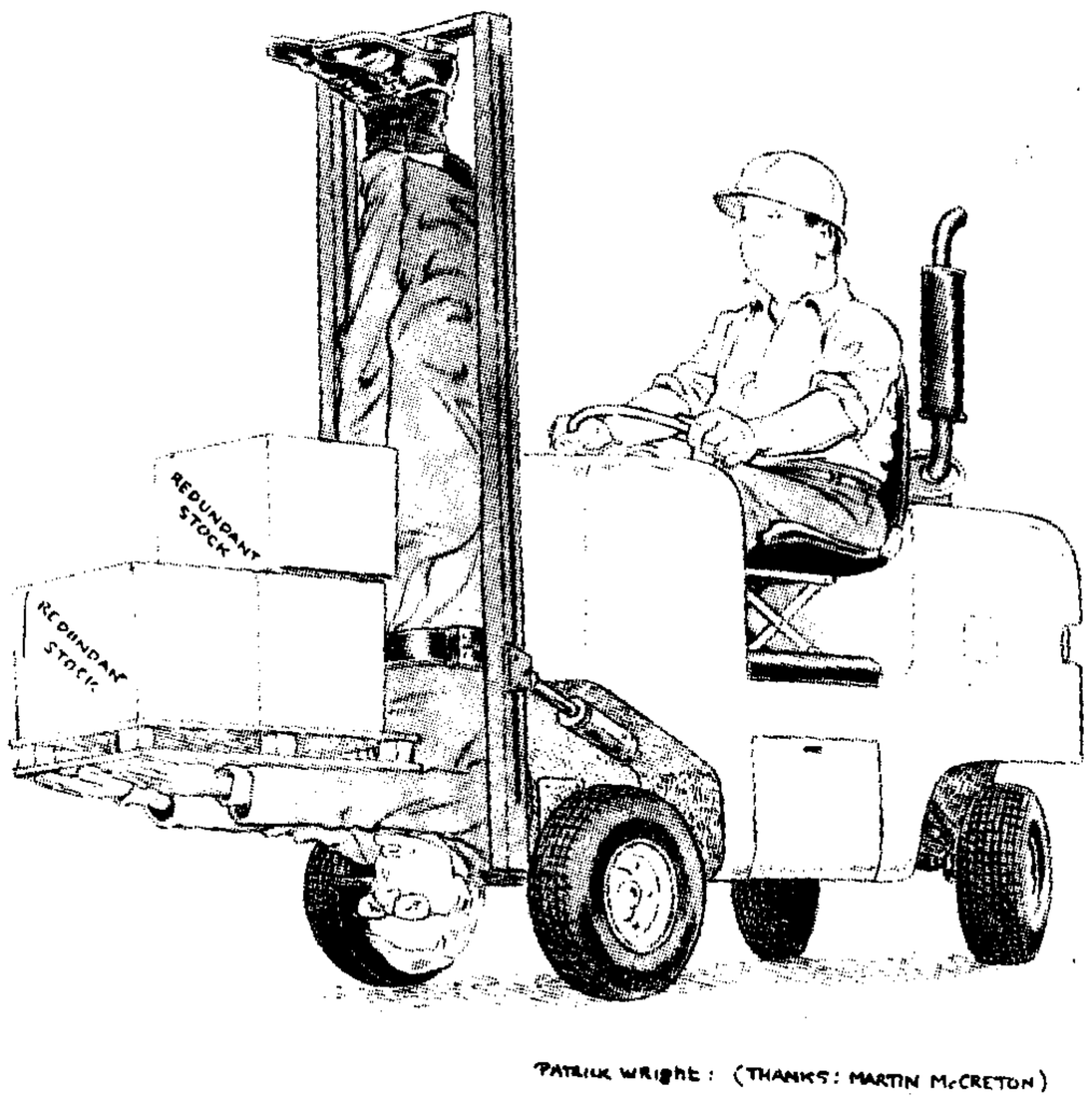
You have
Reached No. 65.

And you are
Too old
To be
Kept alive.

N.H.S. Thribb (aged 17½)

101 USES FOR A JOHN MAJOR

IMPORTANT PART OF A FORK LIFT TRUCK



PATRICK WRIGHT : (THANKS: MARTIN McCRETON)

ENGLAND CAPTAIN IN DIRT SCANDAL

by Our Political Staff **Bruce Atherton**

BELEAGUERED England skipper John Majorton last night admitted that he had been found "with dirt on his hands".

TV evidence showed that members of his team had been cheating regularly in order to win large sums of money from businessmen.

Very Seamy

"The use of pay-dirt is not technically illegal," he said, "and anyway everyone does it. All you do is put a lot of filthy lucre in your pocket just in case you fancy it."

Critics last night refused to accept Majorton's explanation. "He will stay on for a short time," said one insider, "but if his team continues to lose so badly he will stay on again." *(Shurely shome mishtake?)*

LATE SCORE

Brian Lara £300,000,000 not out, retired rich.

Lord Mountbatten related to Royal Family

writes **Andrew Roberts**, the most brilliant historian since Norman Stone
(shurely 'A.J.P. Taylor'? Ed.)

IN A sensational new book by myself (*Churchill Was A Grumpy Old Man and Other Revelations* by A. Roberts, PopEye Books, £125.99), I reveal that Lord Mountbatten was related to the Royal Family, which explains why he rose to a position of such prominence in public life.

Robert's Jammy

My revelation will result in an entire reappraisal of twentieth century history and will force academics to the conclusion that I am the most brilliant historian since A.J.P. Trevor-Roper.

On Other Pages

Was Churchill Hitler? by A. Roberts

THE GUARDIAN

Blair's amazing outburst

by Our Isn't-Blair-Wonderful Staff Michael Whiterthanwhite

IN A speech which sent shock-waves throughout the whole political spectrum, Mr Tony Blair spoke out against the menace of "single-shoe wearers".

In what was widely seen as an attempt to steal the Conservative Party's shoes *(shurely 'clothes'? Ed)* Blur told Brian Walden on ITV: "Two shoes is the natural way to go. It's common sense to have two shoes. Some people of course through misfortune have only one shoe and we should show compassion towards them. But for those who deliberately opt for single-shoe status we would have to say we do support in principal the two shoe wearer and if you're asking me outright where I stand on single-shoe persons I have to say categorically that I am not sure."

Tony Blair is size 8½.

John Walsh, former literary editor of the *Sunday Times* and current editor of the *Independent*'s prestigious Saturday Review, talks to the actress **Miss Elle McPherson** about her role in the forthcoming cinematic work "Sirens".

Cor... phew... blimey... look at the legs on that... whorr!!... eh?... wouldn't kick her out of bed for eating crackers... honestly... bloody 'ell... is it me or is it hot in here or what?... Wahay!!... I reckon I'm in here!! (Cont. p.94)

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Great Bores Of Today.

"... this is amazing have you tried this one? it's Sam and Dave's Woodstock Flavour it's Rhubarb 'n' Blueberry with Hash Brown and Sesame Seeds some of the supermarkets do it but actually you can get it in our off-licence I know it's expensive at £5 a tub but 5p from every bucket goes to charity I used to like the Häagen Dazs stuff by the way did you know that the name is made up? I thought it was a Dutch town but the admen just invented it there's no such place they did a great French Toast Wild Cherry and Christmas Pudding flavour but they don't do it anymore in the end the Americans make the best ice cream probably the Italian influence I mean Baskin-Robbins they're Italian but they changed their name in America I was in New York recently and they've got over 1,000 flavours there do you know for the moon landing anniversary they did a special Hard Cheese one brilliant they have these special farms over there where everything is organic compare it to English ice cream which is all pig fat and additives disgusting mind you I could really murder an ice Yorkie Bar..."

Poetry Corner

In Memorian Andreas Whittam-Smith

So. Farewell then
Andreas Whittam-Smith.

You were the
Editor
Of *The Independent*.

It is.
You're not.

E.J. Thribb (17½)

SUPERMODELS

Neil Kerber

THAT LIZ HURLEY REALLY GETS MY BACK UP!
YEH!
CLICK
ALL OF A SUDDEN SHE'S GETTING THE VERSACE JOBS, AND SHE'S NOT EVEN A MODEL!
I WOULDN'T MIND, BUT SHE DOESN'T EVEN HAVE A WOMAN'S BODY!
CLICK
Kerber

The Secret Diary of John Major aged 47¾

Monday

I am not going to go on about my triumph in Corfu, but it has to be said that it has completely changed the political climate of our time, oh yes. *Since I said no* to Mr Dehaene, Mr Herr Kohl has been very considerably more respectful in his dealings with me. Only this morning he sent me a letter saying that we had chosen a Mr Santer from Luxembourg to be President of Europe, instead of Mr Dehaene, and he was sure that I would not be foolish enough to use my veto again. "I know where you live," he added in a rather curious postscript, which is not surprising as it is well known that I live at 10 Downing Street, London, England, Great Britain, the EU, the World, the Solar System, the Universe, SW1 1BF.

Tuesday

Mr Santer has annoyed me in no small measure. He has announced that he is in complete agreement with Mr Dehaene, Mr Delors and Herr Kohl about everything, particularly the Single Currency and the Social Chapter. "What is the meaning of this?" I asked Mr Hurd. "I thought you said he was different?" "So he is, prime minister," replied Mr Hurd. "He is much thinner than Mr Dehaene and spells his name differently." "But what about my great Corfu victory over the federalists?" I asked. "You made your point," said Mr Hurd. "You stood up to Mr Kohl, and now you can afford to be magnanimous by doing what he says."

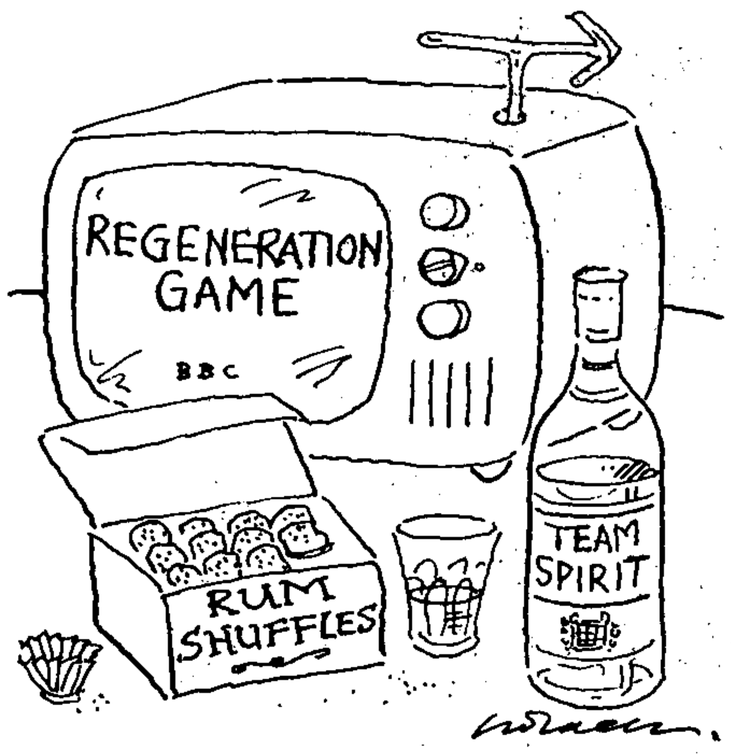
Wednesday

To complete my regeneration of the Tory Party so that we can win the next election, I am now working on my historic reshuffle. The most important task is finding the right man to be Chairman of the Party. I spent the morning ringing up all the people I could think of, like Mr Heseltine, but they all said that it was far too great an honour for them. Mr Heseltine did, however, come up with one suggestion that I found very flattering, which was that by far the best person to do the job was myself. "And who would do my job in the meantime?" I asked. He laughed in a friendly way, and put the phone down.

Thursday

At last today I had a real stroke of luck with the main bit of my reshuffle. I was in the queue in the tearoom waiting to choose a doughnut from the glass case, when I got chatting to a very nice man who said he had always wanted to meet me because both our fathers had been in the entertainment business. It turned out that we had another thing in common, ie that we were both Conservative MPs. Over our cups of tea I suddenly had a brainwave. "Would you like to be Chairman of the Conservative Party?" I asked him. He seemed very surprised and at first said nothing, so I added "and you can also have a job in the Cabinet". He immediately agreed, and offered to buy me a nut slice. It turned out that he was called Mr Hanley, like the famous toy shop, except with an "n" instead of an "m".

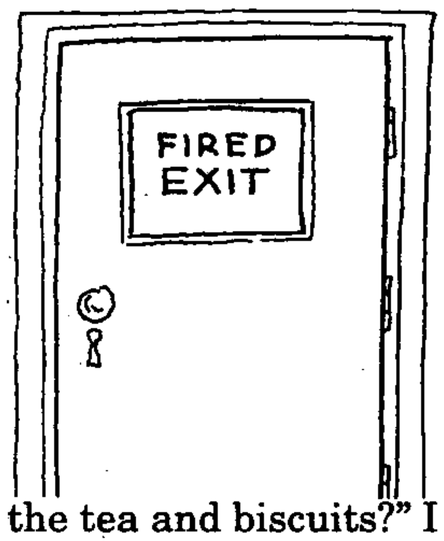
After that the rest of my reshuffle was very easy. Mr Hurd, Mr Clarke, Mr Heseltine, Mr Howard, Mr Lilley, Mr Rifkind, Mr Newton and Mr Gummer all stay in the jobs where they have been so successful, as does Mrs



Bottomley. Mr Portfolio is to be taught a lesson by giving him his own department. Mr Meyer said that it was a very good "new look" but that I should sack one or two other ministers to show how tough I am. I made out a list of names and then I went off to Ryman's to buy a special box of pins at a summer-reduced rate of £1.99 per 100 (approx), with heads in different colours. I chose a blue one, which I thought was appropriate, and closing my eyes I stuck it in the Daily Telegraph list of the Cabinet. Unfortunately, I found that my first choice to be sacked was myself! Obviously that was impossible, so I tried again and the unlucky names were Mr Brooke, Mr MacGregor and Mr Patten. Also someone called Lord Wakeham whom I had never heard of.

It was the hardest thing I have ever done since I became prime minister, to get Miss Hogg to send them all faxes saying that they had been sacked. Thirty seconds after she had finished, a fax came back from Mr Patten, which said: "It is a great pleasure to be out of your government, you bastard."

Miss Hogg then explained to me that, if I sacked Mr Patten, I would have to promote Mrs Shephard in his place, and give Mr Waldegrave *her* job, whatever it was. "But who then will



bring in the tea and biscuits?" I asked. "The Tea and Biscuits portfolio, which is part of the Citizen's Charter and Science brief," Miss Hogg explained, "will have to go to Mr Hunt, whose job has gone to Mr Portfolio." These reshuffles are certainly very complicated! But you do not get to be prime minister without being able to pick a fresh new team every few months!

Friday

The Labour Party has chosen Mr Blair as its leader. Thank goodness they have picked a man I am not scared of. Oh no. He holds no fears for me!! Just because he is young and has what my wife Norman calls charisma, it does not mean in any way that I am perturbed by him. Quite the opposite, as it happens. In fact I would rather not hear his name mentioned at all so unworried am I by him and I have asked Norman to leave him out of her conversation entirely. Particularly I have asked her to stop saying "I think he's going to win."

Saturday

To show how unfrightened I am by Mr Blair I decided to do what my press officer Mr Meyer said and go to the Test Match with my friend Jeffrey. Jeffrey knows a lot about cricket and gave me a very good tip — i.e. that England would win. They did not, but Jeffrey explained that it was like one of his short stories when the end is always different from the beginning.

It is very nice to see the South Africans playing cricket in England again after so long. This is something we Conservatives can be proud of. "If it had not been for us," I said to a colourful black man called Mr Archbishop Tutu, "the South Africans would not be returning after 29 years."

"No," he said, "we'd have been here ages ago."

He seems to have missed the point like so many church leaders, and not only in *his* country.

Sunday

I am in no small measure looking forward to my holiday as we are going once again to Portugal (I think).

Unfortunately the French air traffic controllers are on strike, which may mean that we will not get there. Why can't other countries get their transport policies in order?

"Shall we go by train instead?" asked Norman, giving me one of her funny looks.

THE NUMBER TEN RED HERRING

A New Short Story from the Master Taleteller of Our Times

Jeffrey Archer

"GOOD AFTERNOON, Prime Minister. So good of you to come to my garden party in my luxury, £850,000 river-side home at Granchester, famous for having been once lived in by another great English writer, Rupert Brooke."

The speaker was a tanned, handsome, rich, talented former Olympic athlete who had given up his career as an astronaut to devote his life to helping those less fortunate than himself, ie the Conservative Party.

"Hello, Lord Archer, it was very gracious of you to ask me and my wife Norma to your party."

The speaker was none other than the Prime Minister of England, John Major.

"I think you know everyone here," Lord Archer beamed, as he shook the British premier warmly by the hand.

"Lord Parkinson, Lord Howe, Lord Tebbit, Sir Timothy Rice, Mr Torvill and Miss Dean, the world-famous ice-skating duo, and of course Miss Mariella Frostrup, who needs no introduction."

The prime minister smiled and looked across the manicured lawns to where the world-famous River Cam wound its way lazily through ancient water meadows towards the distant sea.

"Ah," sighed Mr Major, "this is really England at its best, Jeffrey; I congratulate you." The famous novelist laughed heartily, and saw his opportunity to whisper a very special request in the PM's ear. "Can I be Chairman of the Party?"

By a brilliant twist, the master storyteller has provided this story with four alternative endings. These are:

A. At this moment, two burly policemen elbowed their way through the crowd of celebrities and brusquely commanded the distinguished novelist to come down to the station to help them with their enquiries.

B. The prime minister choked on his piece of Mary Archer's world-famous Shepherd's Pie, and said "You must be joking, Jeff. I'm unpopular enough as it is without having you around."

C. The Prime Minister woke up in a cold sweat and turned to his wife. "I've just had the most ghastly nightmare. I dreamed we went to one of Jeffrey's awful garden parties and he asked me to make him Chairman of the Party."

D. The reader, having got this far, gets so irritated by this drivel that he turns to his wife and says: "I'm not going to lug this all the way home. Let's leave it in the hotel bedroom to ruin someone else's holiday."

WAS GRAHAM GREENE A WOMAN?

by **Christopher Whohee**
(author of *The Annotated Cheque Stubs Of Graham Greene)*

A SENSATIONAL new book about author Graham Greene, the seventeenth published this week, reveals that the Catholic novelist may well have been a woman.

Author Prof. Norman Toshberger puts forward astonishing new evidence which suggests that Greene, in addition to being a senior officer in the KGB, was a transvestite nun who enjoyed having public sex on the altars of more than 400 cathedrals while being stabbed repeatedly with burning pokers.

Among the Professor's other findings about Greene:

- **The novelist stole the plots of all his novels from Jeffrey Archer.**
- **His real name was Natasha Wheen.**
- **He had an affair with Josef Stalin when the Soviet dictator was studying to be a priest at a Jesuit seminary.**
- **He often went to *Spectator* lunches when in London and once met Jeffrey Bernard.**

Prof. Toshberger's revelations will be welcomed by the *Daily Telegraph* as a way to fill up its pages for the next two months *(shurely 'will be welcomed by scholars for the light they shed on the brooding moral ambiguity of Britain's greatest novelist'?)*.

MAN IN THE EVE

The Lunar Veteran Whose Historic Mission Changed His Life For Good

"WHEN you've been to the moon, nothing in life ever quite matches up to the experience."

So says Colonel "Buzz" Cow, the first cow to jump over the moon.

Interviewed in his California home, Colonel Cow talks frankly about his problems on returning to earth.

"I started drinking heavily. I went into therapy and eventually I found religion."

But the Colonel, now a retired milk salesman in Palm Springs, says that his experience was typical of all those involved in the moon mission.

"The pressure told on us all. The Dish and Spoon split up soon afterwards and the Dish more or less slept his way through the entire cutlery drawer. The little dog hasn't laughed since and has become a Mormon. The cat who orchestrated the historic moon-jump is now in the Betty Ford Clinic on a detoxification programme."

But the cow still believes that the enterprise was worthwhile.

"We should be endeavouring to build on my achievement," he told us, "and put a sheep on Mars."

Continuing the hugely popular Sunday Colour Supplement you can read exclusively in every paper...

IPFRONTERS

He's good looking, I **Grant** you, but **Hugh** will he choose to take home? Will it be a **Hurley** night with **Liz** or a night of **Cindy** with Ms **Crawford**?! **Hugh** knows? *(You've done that, Ed.)*

Who's the Woman in **Black**!! It must be Lady **Conrad**, also known as **Barbara**! And who's her **A-miel** ticket tonight!? Step forward the millionaire Spectator columnist! Talk about **Taki**!

It's non-**Stoppard** for a busy playwright!? He shouldn't be **Tom**-fooling around with that **Lady** though!! It's a no-**Windsor** situation with her! It must be **Helen** being Royal.

Steady **Eddie**!! Who are you admiring so **Ardent**-ly?! Rear-ly, sir!?! Euro-in big trouble if **Neil** finds out you're dancing with his EC MP Missis!? He'll **Kinnock** your block off!!

Who says a **Rolling Stone** gathers no **Moss**?!! In this case, Kate certainly fits the **Bill**! The question is **Why-man**?

Nunn of that in public, thank you very much!! Actress **Imogen** can't keep her hands off director hubby **Trevor**!? That's the ticket, **Stubbs**!! *(This is pathetic, Ed.)*

(That's enough piss-poor captions to dreary PR photos by clapped-out hacks — Ed)

PERGAU DAM – Man In Suit Blamed

by Our Exoneration Staff **Willie Whitewash**

A MAN in a suit was today singled out in a shock report by MPs as the only person who was to blame for the appalling £450 million Pergau Dam scandal.

The man in a suit, who used to be in the government but now lives quietly in Scotland and works in a bank, was named as Lord Younger, 57.

Lord George Knew Mahathia

The report concluded that it was very important for everyone to realise that Lord Younger bore sole responsibility for telling the Malaysians that we would build them a free dam if they were silly enough to buy some of our planes.

The following people should be absolutely exonerated of any blame whatsoever, the MPs urged:

1. Lady Thatcher
2. J. Major
3. D. Hurd
4. Tim Bell
5. Anyone except Lord Younger, who is now conveniently out of the way.

LATE NEWS: Lord Younger To Blame For British Library Fiasco

An official report has found that Lord Younger, who wears a suit and lives in Scotland, was entirely to blame for offering the new £450 million British Library to the Malaysians in exchange for a few old tanks that nobody wanted, least of all the Malays.

Lord Younger is also solely to blame for the recent disastrous spell of hot weather which has inflicted untold suffering on asthma victims and may lead to hosepipe bans in the Cotswolds.

ON OTHER PAGES

Major Blames Younger For Train Strike 24
Was Younger Behind Jupiter Comet Disaster? 26
Younger – Did He Kidnap Baby Abbie? 32

Ashdown wields the axe

by Our Political Staff **Simon Hefferlump**

WESTMINSTER was rocked to its foundations yesterday when Liberal leader Paddy Ashgrove snatched the front-page headlines from John Major by announcing his long-awaited front-bench reshuffle.

In one of the biggest shake-ups British politics has ever known, out go: **Jim Horsebottle**, shadow spokesman on consumer affairs, who put up a lacklustre performance in the debate on EC quotas on Chinese imports of toy fish; **Simon Ripple**, spokesman on bridleways and footpaths, who has disappointed as the man sitting on David Steel's right with the green tie.

In come: **Paddy Ashtray**, brilliant, charismatic party leader who assumes both these portfolios and indeed all others.

'I BELIEVE IN SANTER' says Major

by Our Man In Fairyland
Rudolph The Red-Nosed Journalist

MR JOHN Major last night admitted that he still believed in Santer as a kindly old gentleman living in Luxembourg who was nice to children and who didn't support a federalist Europe at all.

Despite being told many times that Santer was just a boring man in a suit who did what he was told by Herr Kohl, Master Major persisted in his touching belief in this benevolent and mythical figure.

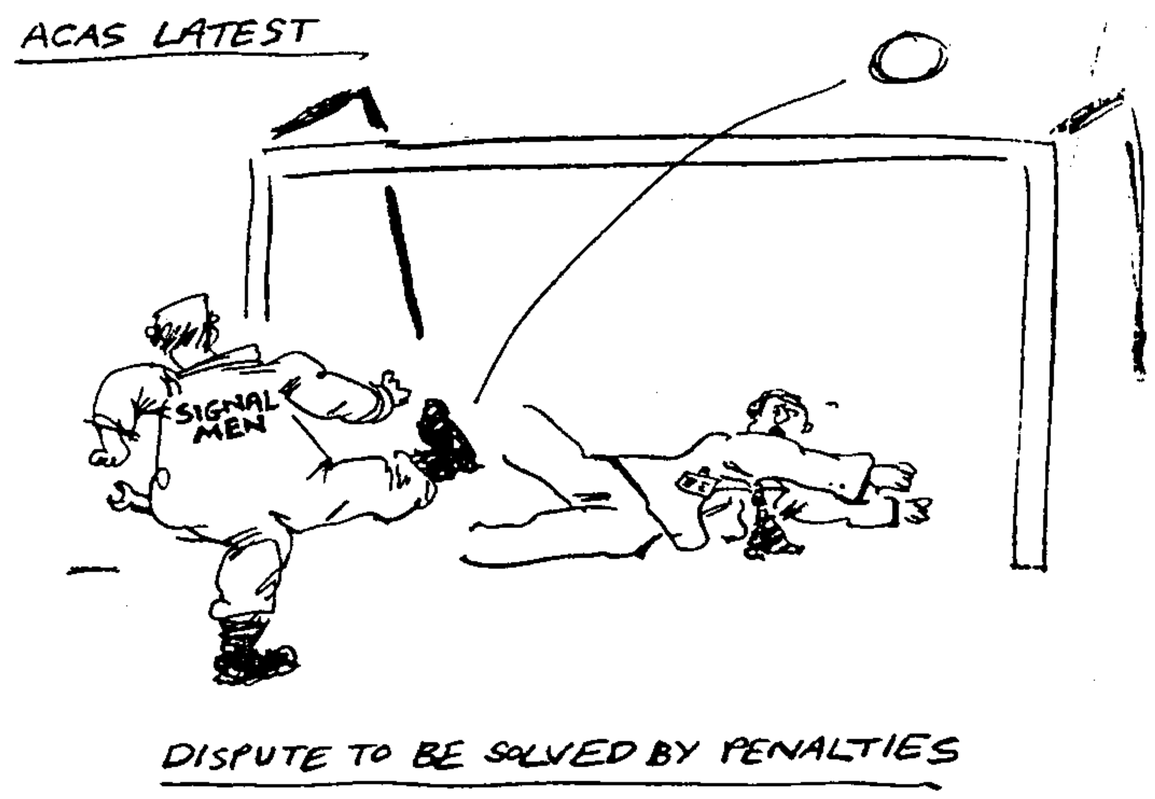
Santer Opt-Out Claus

This is the endearing letter that little Johnny sent to Santer shortly before he was chosen as President of the EC Commission.

Dear Santer
Please may I have the following
1. No single currency
2. No social Chapter
3. no further moves towards Euro-integration
4. A Scalextric car which goes in the fast lane But only very slowly

yours sincerely
J MAJOR (7)

PS I have been a good boy all the year



THAT NEW TORY CHAIRMAN

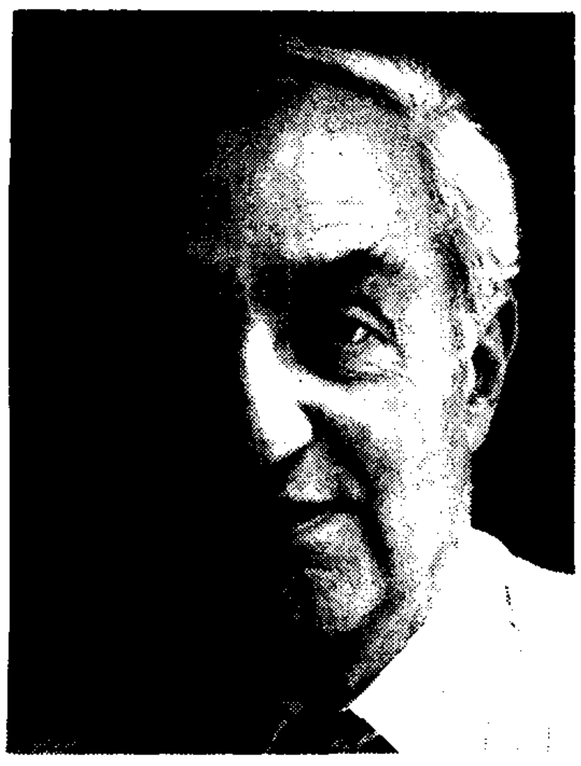
PROFILE

(Exclusive to all newspapers)

LITTLE is known about Jeremy Hanley, the new Chairman of the Conservative Party. Something of a dark horse, Hanley is known in political circles as a very private politician who keeps his cards "very close to his chest".

As one Westminster insider told me this morning: "I've no idea who he is — but isn't he this new man who was on television last night?" Cuttings reveal that the new Chairman's father was a successful World War Two comedian named Tommy Hanley, who starred in the hit radio show *Who's That Man Again?*

But as for the shy, retiring, intensely unknown Chairman of the Tory Party, plucked from



Jeremy Hanley

obscurity by Mr Major, very little has yet been written about him, which is why I can find out very little about him from our library.

Nevertheless, *(cont. p.94)*

World of Soccer

KNEE EYES WORLD CUP STARS

by **E.I. Erewego**, Our Man At The Rosebowl Sitting Next To An American Asking What A Goal Is

THE WORLD of soccer was rocked to its foundations when Ron Knee, the 57-year-old manager of Neasden FC, told reporters that he had put in a bid for the whole Brazilian team. The tight-lipped supremo explained: "They are match-winners, every one of them, and they are going to swap the yellow jersey of Brazil for the famous black and white hooped strip of Neasden."

Baggio: Neasden bound?

BRAZIL NUT

Experts were amazed that the recently relegated North London club with reported debts of £10 million and a jail sentence hanging over its chairman could be in the marketplace for the world's top eleven players, but Ron Knee made his position clear.

"The Brazil side we are looking at is the World Cup winning side of 1958. You are going to see names like Aristotle, Hebrides, Georgino, Carlos Santana, Bibi, Ricardo Salamanca, Suez, Filio Oranjeboom and his brother Ronsõn, Frostrup, and Whittam-Smith."

Although some of Knee's shopping list are in their 70s and many are dead, the ashen-faced mastermind of the Neasden squad refuses to be downcast.

"I have put £25 on the table. They can take it or leave it. But one thing is for sure. Neasden will be fielding a world class side, with the samba rhythms echoing around our all-seater (one) stadium for the big kick-off in August."

LATE SCORE

Pre-Season Charity Exhibition Friendly (sponsored by The Sofabed Company)

FC Neasden	0
Dollis Hill	0

After extra time and penalty shoot-out there was still no score

Minister without Portfolio (Leader of the Conservative Party): Jeremy Hanley, 48, no ministerial salary, but retains MP's salary of £31,687

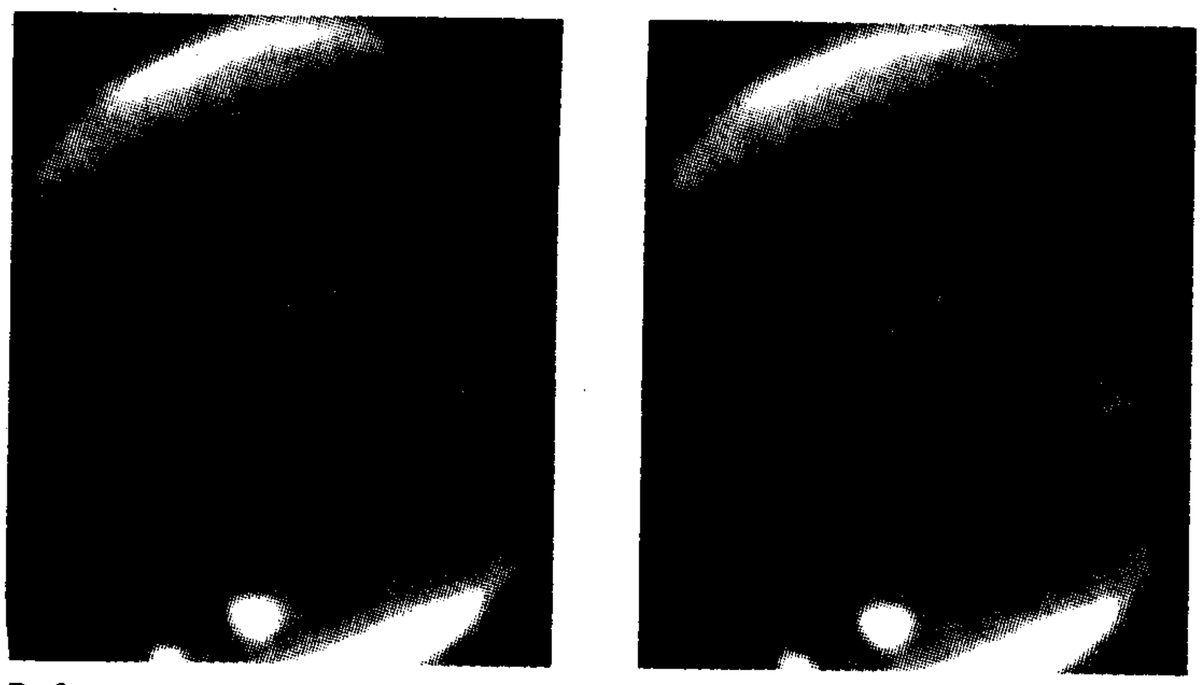
Independent

Company bosses also came under fire from MPs last week over new chairman Richard Ireland's salary of £100,000 a year.

Mr Ireland's contract only requires him to attend less than one meeting a week.

Express & Star

PRIVATE EYE EXCLUSIVE



Before *After*

MOST DRAMATIC SPACE PICTURES EVER SEEN

by Our Man In Space **TV's Patrick Bore (no relation)**

YES, make no mistake about it, these are the most astonishing photos I have ever seen!

Look carefully at these two pictures. The one on the left shows the planet Jupiter as it looked at 9.46 last night.

Only seconds later it is hit head on by a piece of the comet Shoesize-Eleven 250,000 times the size of Planet Earth, with a force the equivalent of 10 billion Hiroshimas.

As the picture on the right clearly shows, the universe will never be the same again.

Last night astronomers were jubilant. "We can now see how the Universe began," said Professor Branestawm of the University of Heath Robinson in Pasodoble, California. "We know everything now."

GNOMEBY'S Auction Rooms

est. 1993

A Sale of Very Important Memorabilia And Other Effects, formerly the property of a gentleman resident in the USSR (**the late Mr H.A.R. Philby**), including:

1 Very Important Wooden Coathanger, bearing inscription HOTEL BERIA, DNEPROPETROPAVLOVSKI;

1 Copy *Pravda*, 14 July 1953, heavily foxed (crossword incomplete);

1 Very Important Set of Medals, including Order of the Leningrad Metro 2nd Class with Ribbon;

1 Shopping List noted in autograph on reverse of ticket to performance by Bolshoi Ballet of Khatchaturian's *The Heroic Tractor Driver*, including items such as "Cabbage", "Vodka", "More Cabbage", "Vodka" and "Jar Cooper's Oxford, I should be so lucky".

Guide Prices from Gnomeby's Celebrity Department — £400,000 minimum for each item

GNOMEBY'S
No. 1 For Dead Traitor's Rubbish

MOSCOW — LONDON — PYONGYANG

A Dentist Writes

As a dentist I am often asked: "Do mercury amalgam fillings cause Alzheimer's Disease?" I always reply: "No, of course not. It's a lot of typical journalistic scaremongering."

The patient then asks me, "Do mercury amalgam fillings cause Alzheimer's Disease?" I then reply "You've just asked me that", to which the patient says "Who are you?"

If you are worried about mercury amalgam fillings, do not watch *Panorama*.

© *A. Dentist*

Yes! It's Islington Person Rhyming Slang!

Georgian Square	**Tony Blair**
Wife called Cherie	**Canonbury**
One of us!	**No. 19 Bus**
Islington Person	**Clive And-erson**
Stripped pine door	**Clause Four**
Louis Blom-Cooper	**Food at Granita's super!**
Sons of Toil	**Virgin olive oil**
Francis Wheen	**Stuffed Aubergine**
Salmon Fishcakes	**Martin Jaques**
Geoff Robertson QC	**Glass of Chablis**
Chardonnay	**Minimum pay**
Screen on the Green	**Where Mike Ignatieff's seen**
Charles Moore	**Lives next door** *(shurely shome mishtake? Ed)*

*"... so, to recap: your parents are both tossers, your teachers are all f**kers, and I'm a four-eyed shirt-lifter whose car is being 'done over' as we speak"*

DIARY

BERNARD LEVIN

Forsooth, my liege, I may have said it before, and — for these things, as all sane men and women, not to mention children or, for that matter, babes in arms, understand, come in the most circular, roundabout or cyclical of cycles — I have little doubt that I shall, in the course of time (incidentally, I purchased a new watch last week, and what a splendid contraption it is, measurably smaller than a full-blown clock and fitted with a handy little strap for the purpose of securing it to the wearer's wrist, thus affording him the correct time, at a look or glance, throughout his busy, industrious, hard-working, labouring, active day) say it again, but we know precious little about this multifariously spinning globe we term, for the sake of simplicity (and when was simplicity ever forsaken within the portals of this column, may one ask, in a spirit of most humble, as our old chum Mr U. Heep might enunciate it, inquiry?) the world, and that little knowledge of which we can indeed boast — the undoubted excellence, undoubtedly excellent, of a night spent in the most sumptuously comfortable seat at the new (was ever newness such a novelty? was ever novelty so *new*?) Glyndbourne opera house of my very dear friend Mr George Christie of that parish and Mary, perfect chatelaine, whom God preserve, and preserve again, and preserve thrice over, nay a double brace of times, oh, *very well then*, preserve *forever*, all the while feasting, *twixt* arias, upon a serviceable dish, plate, bowl or saucer (though a saucer, forgive me, may be too small, tiny, *petite*, a dish too big, large, extravagant, ostentatious, grandiose for such a task) laden, for preference — my own preference, that is (who else's? you may well ask) — with a goodly selection of gloriously succulent cheeses (I am, I will have you know, a *chevalier de la Confrerie des Tastes-Fromage de France*, and, pshaw, I have a medal to prove it, forsooth, and let no one, neither man nor beast, beast nor man, tell me I haven't, or I will term him an arrant knave and damned bounder to boot and challenge him to pistols at dawn, or in the early morning, whichever renders up the more words upon the page) among them a divinely gooey *Reblochon*, rich and velvety in its almost velvety richness, comparable to the finest *Dairylea*, the perfect accompaniment to, say, Don Giovanni's dying notes, with their ripe overtones of saliva dripping off *foie gras de canard*, washed down with a supremely sticky, fiendishly syrupy and altogether sublimely heavenly *Muscat de Beaumes de Venise*, blissfully reminiscent of Kathleen Ferrier's positively liquid performance in Gluck's *Orfeo*, and the knowledge, doubt thee not, nor, having doubted once, doubt again, that what goes up must, as the philosopher (damned doltish profession) once famously opined, come down, descend, drop, dive, plunge, decline, topple, fall, come and cropper (and admirers of Sir Isaac will be profoundly relieved and encouraged to learn that I entirely agree with him in matters gravitational), yet, if you will kindly settle down, preferably with a stiffish drink in hand, and hear out my present argument, there remains within this world, this globe (what a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty, in form, in moving, how express and admirable! in articles, how capable of plundering the goodly Bard!), this sphere revolving in space (hurrah! I'm almost halfway through my own allotted space!) an immense variety of questions both unanswered and unanswerable, their solution known only to the precious phew I'm over halfway now, their secrets deciphered and maintained by a masterful elite (nothing wrong with elites, mark you, oh my word *no*), among these *questions eternale*, and I will not list them all, though on second thoughts I might, being the age-old riddle, posed in many a dusty tome (I am an inveterate and unashamed bookworm forsooth) of why did the chicken, free-range or factory-farmed, boiled or grilled, roasted or poached, grain-fed or corn-fed, clucking or unclucking, with a deliciously *piquant* sauce or without (and, as long as I live, I shall never forget the *Poulet d'Agneau aux Sauce Cerises* I was served in *Monsieur Merdeoc*'s fine establishment in the *Bruderholz Allée* in *Basle* in the company of a delicious young lady whose name now, alas, escapes me), cross the road, the lane, the street, the thoroughfare allowing easy (but is anything ever easy? I think not — *thank God*) access to vehicles both authorised and unauthorised, a riddle that, you can bet your bottom dollar, you will have the devil's own job to unravel, if unravel it you seek to do, and one should not lightly set aside the second great riddle, a riddle that has vexed, doth vex and will continue, doubt ye not midshipmen all, to vex Honest Jack Levin, as once it vexed our old friends Socrates and Plato (come to think of it, is there anything in all history to touch the thoughts of those two wise old birds, thoughts so similar in profundity to my own, though ne'er, methinks, so fulsomely express'd?), namely, how can the hard press'd columnist, deadline advancing in time's winged chariot like Coleridge's corn-fed bird of ill omen (Oman, it might interest you to hear, is far from being my favourite country, indeed, it may even benefit you, dear reader, to dip into your groaning wallet full hard and long before sending out your butler to stake that hard earn'd tuppeny-ha'penny with your trusty neighbourhood bookmaker upon a wager that it is among my very *least favourite* of countries), extend his meagre thimbleful of opinions, *apercus*, humorous asides, observations, expressions of dissent, ill-gotten japes, seasoned beliefs, dogmas, convictions, judgements, tenets (call me sissy, but I would prefer, willy-nilly, to sleep between four walls and a ceiling than ever in a tenet), views, reminiscences, declarations, debates, enthusiasms and arguments in such a way as to fill the vast space allotted by whomsoever decideth upon such infernal matters in the inky recesses of the newspaper in question, and let us thus pause awhile to raise aloft a hearty cheer to that happy band of men — may I include myself? — who have, with one resounding whoop of delight, happened to crack this particular nut, and to whom the secret of spinning out words — nouns, adjectives, verbs, pronouns, even on occasion (ooh! you old devil Levin, you!) adverbs and peradventure conjunctions — has been well and truly vouchsafed, for it is a secret — if secret it be, and it most certainly is, or my name is Jack Robinson, which it is not, or was not when last I looked at my birth certificate, which I have not, I should herein admit, for many a long moon — based upon the age-old but alas now long-forgotten art of waffle, waffle repetitive (I repeat — repetitive) and yet strangely forthright, waffle sentimental and soggy, waffle banal and conceited, waffle so brilliantly wound up within itself, a veritable monument of waffle in praise of the waffler, waffle all so perfectly *wafflish*, that forsooth, my liege, I may have said it before, and — for these things, as all sane men and women, not to mention children, or, for that matter, babes in arms, understand, come in the most circular, roundabout or cyclical of cycles — I have little doubt that I shall, in the course of time, think now what was I saying?

WHOEVER wins the forthcoming Labour leadership contest, it is likely that Gordon Banks will play an important part in determining economic policy if the next general election goes the party's way. *Investors' Chronicle*

Information for candidates

- This paper assesses **En2 Reading and English Literature.**
- The paper is worth **30%** of your final award in **English** and **30%** of your final award in **English Literature.**
- You will be awarded marks for accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.

GCSE (Northern Examinations & Assessment Board)

Literary Review

Popular friction

IN THE whole of literary London there are few more instructive and amusing sights than the spectacle of a popular novelist going around demanding to be taken seriously.

The symptoms of this ancient malady are well-known: an overwhelming urge to devise blurbs telling the impressionable reader about the brainy subjects you studied at university, and an irrepressible desire to make oracular pronouncements about politics are only two of them. All as engaging — and as futile, alas — as Martin Amis's exploits at the dart-board or Julian Barnes at the snooker table, a kind of inverted slumming which fools nobody.

Just lately, however, this quest for respectability on the part of the airport bookstall brigade has reached a new plateau of stridency, and there have been several whiny little articles in the papers by the likes of Ken Follett and Maeve Haran lamenting the neglect of "popular" fiction by the literary editors.

Mr Follett, author, among other magisterial tomes, of *Eye of the Needle* and *The Pillars of the Earth*, has even jokily suggested that he ought to win the Booker Prize. The logic is flawless. Booker Prize winners are apparently about sex, money and power. Well, so are our Ken's darling volumes, only more so. Plus, he sells more books, so a cheque for £20,000 and an *Observer* profile would be just dandy, thanks very much.

Before we dissolve into fits of giggles at the thought of Mr Follett in his evening suit at the Guildhall lecturing the TV cameras about his art, it might be as well to concede that he has a point: not, let it immediately be said, about the merits of his own singular works, but about the wider literary environment.

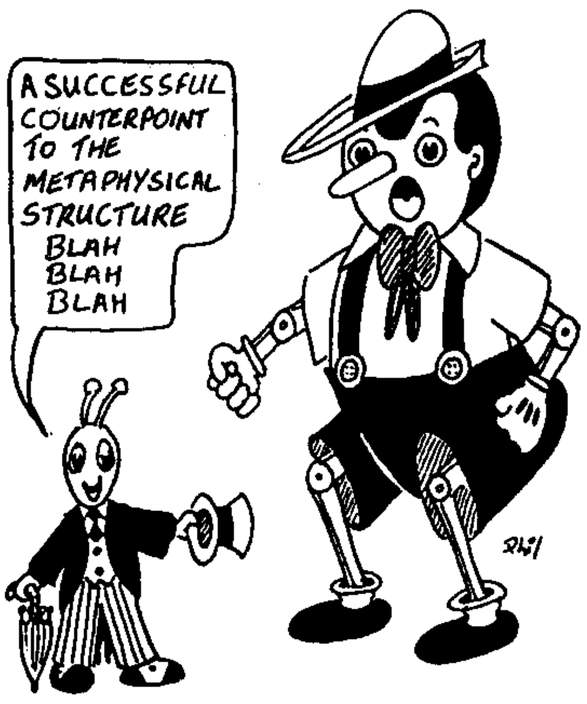
For the world of books is indeed a lop-sided and elitist concern. The volumes you see so lavishly reviewed in the posh papers sell an average of 1,500 copies in hardback. Blockbusters, when grudgingly admitted to the fold, tend to be riotously dismembered by smart young men on grounds of implausibility, fatuity and faulty syntax. All this, understandably, makes Ken & Co very upset. Selling a quarter of a million copies might bring you the car, the gabled villa and the hobnobbing with the leader of the Labour party, but it sure as hell won't get you respect.

All this would be just a touch more acceptable if it could be shown that the "literary novel", which keeps Ken & Co off the books pages and which nobody reads or buys, were any good. But the decline of the English novel is a critical commonplace these days, and if you wanted an authentic comment on the present state of British fiction it could be found in the railway carriages full of commuters reading reprinted classics at a pound a time — books with plots, characters and style, and happy endings. In this depressing atmosphere, it might reasonably be wondered why the literary editors don't review the popular books except to poke fun at them.

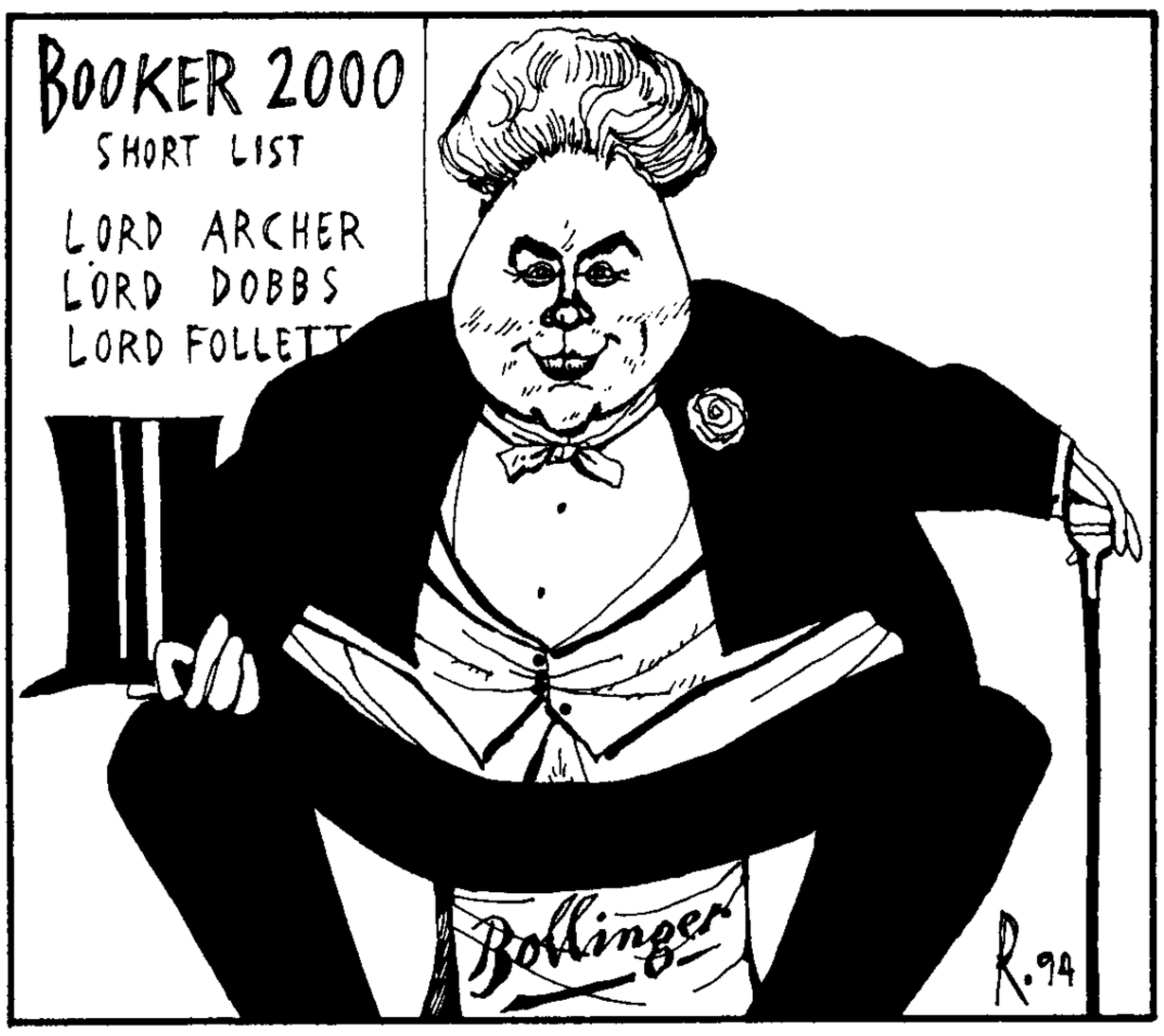
The explanation lies, I fear, in the fact that most popular fiction is quite staggeringly bad. We all know about Jeffrey. Jack and Freddie gave up years since. A few quotations from Mr Follett's latest opus are enough to prove the point. *A Dangerous Fortune* (Pan, £5.99), lately unleashed on to the shelves, is an historical novel, which basically means people with late 20th century sensibilities and vocabulary wandering around in Victorian costume, rife with cattleprod psychology and pop-eyed sex. Some of its descriptive passages are *jolly revealing*, especially old Señor Miranda with his tanned face "carved in lines of aggression and brutality", not to mention his son Mickey, who suspects that the formal clothes of a woman he fancies "covered a voluptuous body, and the arrogant, imperious manner concealed a passionate nature".

Just the usual writing by numbers, then, and it won't do, it really won't. You might carp at modern writerly pretensions — and when it comes to taking yourself seriously, did anyone ever do this quite so raptly as, say, Jeanette or Salman? — but in an age where the highbrows turn up their noses at crowd-pleasing tricks like decent characters and a plot, and the low-brows can't actually write, the likes of Amis junior will always win out over styleless, guileless Ken.

Just occasionally, of course, there does emerge a "popular" writer who is some good — George Macdonald Fraser, for instance, whose Flashman novels are about the nearest thing we have to Stevenson. But will the new Flashman ever be nominated for the Booker? And if it is, will anyone even look at it?



Oh no! It's Jiminy Critic



Books & Bookmen

■ WHEN John Updike's new book was published recently, the *Financial Times*'s literary editor, Annalena McAfee, felt it deserved a critic of some stature.

"Dear Martin Amis," she wrote, "I am writing to ask whether you would be interested in reviewing John Updike's latest novel, *Brazil*... I do think you would do an excellent job on it."

To be on the safe side, she simultaneously sent a letter to Ian McEwan inviting *him* to do the job. "I feel," she explained, "you would be the best person to review it."

On the same day, she despatched yet another letter, to the American author Joan Didion. "I am writing to ask whether you would be interested in reviewing John Updike's latest novel, *Brazil*," she wrote, in the now-familiar formulation. "I believe you would be the best person to review it..."

Alas! McAfee's flattery got her nowhere: none of the eminent trio succumbed to her disingenuous blandishments.

□ HARPERCOLLINS' ludicrous £1.8 million sub-est sessions have already achieved a great deal: complete editorial disintegration of the increasingly unhappy Hammersmith publishing house.

The personnel director has been removed from that post and, absurdly, put in charge of the character destruction programme.

Talented popular fiction editor Imogen Taylor has found refuge at Little, Brown. (Her husband, swashbuckling Michael Fishwick, however remains amid the stench of Harpic House.)

Ex-atlas supremo and thoroughly nice guy Barry Winkelman resigned two weeks ago, his job description having been changed once too often. Harvill publisher Christopher Maclehose is finally out, having failed to find accommodation with Eddie McBastard Bell's philistine new regime.

Lord Annan's daughter Juliet, long-standing rights director, has with some relief accepted a similar job at Random House, in place of Georgina Capel. La Capable, like so many other publishers, has fled to the ranks of the agents, joining theatrical luvvies Simpson, Fox.

Most unthinkable of all, will trade publisher Stuart Proffitt, aged 13¾, and most loyal forelock tugging lieutenant of Maestro Bell, decide that he too has had enough, his spirit having been broken by the moronic Americans running the sub-est sessions?

'Bookworm'

SNIPCOCK & TWEED
THIS IS ALL VERY EMBARRASSING — WHICH IS WHY I'M HANDING OVER THE MONEY TO A WOMAN AT VICTORIA STATION
W.H.SMITH
THAT'S £14.99 MR SNIPCOCK
GUILT
SHAME
JEFFREY ARCHER
TWELVE RED HERRINGS

footnotes

The Big Brum Pension Swindle

NEIL DOWN

NEIL HAMILTON, energetic parliamentary under secretary of state for corporate affairs, never stops repeating the motto of his heroine, Margaret Thatcher: that there is "too much government" and that the only good government officials and civil servants are the sacked ones.

For some reason he did not repeat these articles of faith when confronted recently with the Teampace pension scandal — a scandal which caused so much anger and distress in the Midlands that it has even been covered in the *Birmingham Post*.

Two crooks called Mike Spiers and Ken Shaw went around the country buying up companies, appointing themselves trustees to the pension schemes, closing down the schemes and merging them with the central Teampace scheme (sole trustees: Messrs Spiers and Shaw). Among the many firms hit were Burmans in Birmingham; JLS in Redditch; Charlesworth Developments in Dudley; GMS in Sheffield; Dando International in Brighton; and Wild Barfield in Watford.

Inevitably, at the height of the recession in 1991, Teampace Holdings went bust. When the receivers came in, they found to their horror that about £2 million had vanished from the pension fund. Hundreds of workers who had paid all their working lives into the schemes lost at least half their pensions. To the £2 million now must be added the cost of investigations by an independent trustee, the Lord Benchure Trust Corporation, estimated at £800,000.

Mr Shaw and Mr Spiers joined the pension scheme themselves. They didn't pay any money in, but they wrote letters to each other as sole trustees generously increasing the benefits they were to receive from the scheme. With these benefits they then set up a special scheme, subtly entitled the K&M (for "Ken and Mike") executive pension fund. Any directors of any of the firms who complained about any of these rather unusual practices found themselves confronted by newly-appointed directors such as Mrs Lannigan, Mr Shaw's secretary, or by Mrs Spiers.

Even Neil Hamilton might agree that the behaviour of the two crooks was taking the principles of free enterprise a little too far. His government certainly pretends to be "deeply concerned" to protect pensioners from swindlers, and the department responsible for doing so is the corporate affairs unit of the department of trade — Mr Hamilton's very own.

In April 1993, as soon as the receivers of Teampace understood the full horror of the swindle, they told the department of trade unit which deals with disqualification of swindling directors. They outlined what they called the misconduct of Shaw and Spiers, and the case was instantly identified as "a serious category A case".

So serious, so "category A" was the Teampace swindle that nothing whatever was done about it. Months went by and no action was taken. Earlier this year, the time limit for disqualifying errant directors was up. Messrs Spiers and Shaw had got away scot free. They are still directors of at least one company. And thanks to the almost unbelievable incompetence of Mr Hamilton's department they have not been charged or even disqualified.

On 29 June, Neil Hamilton was forced to take time off from authorising extravagant expenditure on publicising his new deregulation initiatives to answer complaints about Teampace from two Birmingham MPs, Richard Burden and Lynne Jones.

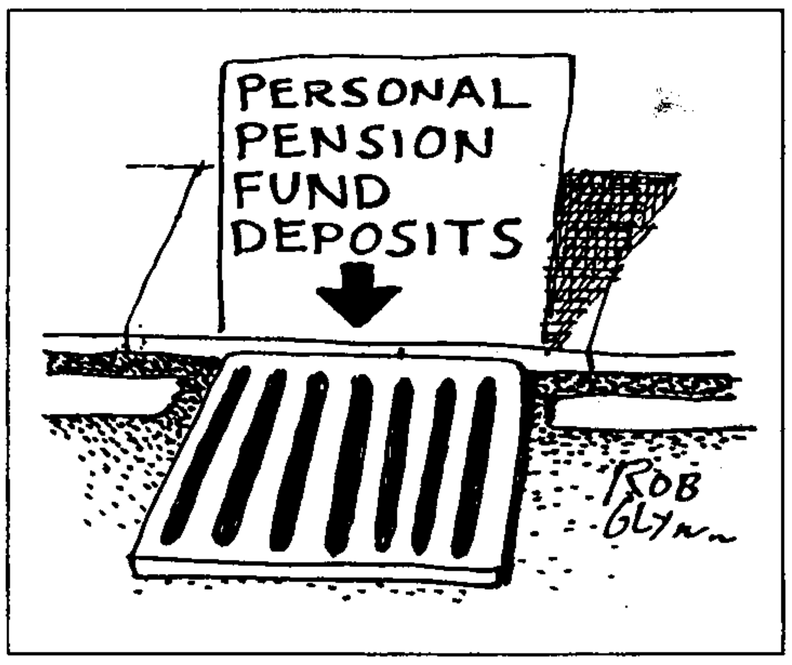
The minister said he was frightfully sorry. There had indeed been "aspects of misconduct" and "a major deficiency in assets" over the Teampace pensions, but no one in his department had done anything about it. The problem, he explained, was "overwork" caused by the irresistible rise in the number of crooked directors going bust in the recession. In 1989-90, he explained, there were 13,000 cases referred to the department's disqualification unit. By 1992-93 this had risen to 42,700 — a 223 per cent increase.

He did not disclose at the time (he was forced to do so by further questions on 11 July) that in the same period the disqualification staff in his department had risen from 45 to, er, 46, a 2 per cent increase.

By the end of his Commons speech on 29 June, the ebullient Hamilton had regained some of his self-confidence. He had, he disclosed, found an antidote to the scandal he so regretted: more privatisation! "We have asked consultants Stoy Hayward to look at the possibility of the private sector's taking on the routine mechanical processing work involved in insolvency administration," he declared triumphantly.

Even for Mr Hamilton, this was a specially brilliant choice of consultant. Stoy Hayward has shown how much it understands the problems of modern private enterprise in so many ways. As auditor to Sock Shop for instance (bust) or to the devious swindler Roger Levitt (bust and convicted); or to the arms company Astra (bust) or to Asil Nadir of Polly Peck (bust and fugitive from justice).

For these last two triumphs Stoy Hayward is under investigation by the joint disciplinary scheme of the Institute of Chartered Accountants. But that is no reason not to be showered with taxpayer's money from the minister who boasts interminably about his deep concern for the taxpayer.



SPOOKY!

■ STUNG by leaked reports in the press that there was a mechanical fault in the Chinook helicopter which crashed on the Mull of Kintyre in June killing 25 intelligence and security chiefs, the manufacturer, Boeing, has been pressing the British government to allow it to inspect the wreckage.

Permission has been refused. Instead, the ministry of defence has given Boeing's helicopter division in Philadelphia an express assurance that there was no mechanical failure.

Meanwhile, the "force control and information centre", the high-level secret information unit of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), has admitted in a confidential briefing to two Belfast newspapers that the helicopter was indeed (as claimed in the *Eye*) heading for the American special forces base at Macrihanish.

The reason, according to the briefing, was "to refuel". No one believes that for a moment since the Chinook was unlikely to have left Aldergrove airport in Belfast with such a precious cargo and an empty tank.

The importance of the secret mission to the base has been underlined by reports in Scotland of the hysteria which followed the crash. Not since Lockerbie have so many security people poured into a single area. Holidaymakers on the Mull were taken off for hours of questioning, chiefly about documents.

The more probing media in Ireland have been full of speculation about a high-level conference at the base, which was to have been attended by MI5, the CIA, Scotland Yard and intelligence chiefs from Dublin.

The *Sunday Business Post* and the *Phoenix* have produced evidence of a plot by intelligence and police to react to an IRA rejection of the Major/Reynolds declaration with a round-up of suspects on both sides of the border. The highly-publicised Operation Madronna on 19 April, involving 1,000 troops and police, is said to have been a "dress rehearsal" for the biggest round-up since internment. An intercepted intelligence phone call suggested that the word "internment" would not be used this time and that suspects would be charged, on intelligence information, of "directing terrorism": a new offence recently introduced successfully into the Northern Ireland courts.

The chief result of the Mull of Kintyre catastrophe, however, is that pretty well all the hard-line intelligence, police and special branch leaders have been wiped out. One curious consequence may be the replacement of MI5 Orange militants with softer greenish types from MI6 who are much keener on a settlement with Sinn Fein.

Nightmare on Watling St.

VICTIMS of racial assault in Chelmsford better watch out in case they come up in front of the local circuit judge, old Carthusian Brian Watling.

Last November Watling presided over a case of violent disorder. In July 1992 social worker Olayinka Ogunbusola was dancing in a nightclub with a white woman when Sean Birch, a keen member of the master race, *smashed him in the face with a broken bottle.*

As soon as he saw that Olayinka had a brother (a law student), the brave Birch made a dash for the exit. The brothers chased after him, until he got away in a taxi.

The following day, the brothers went to the police to complain about the attack. They were arrested and charged with violent disorder. They appeared at Chelmsford crown court last November, Judge Watling up. They were convicted and sent to prison for 18 months. Birch the assailant got two years.

After a long delay the case came to the court of appeal in May.

Lord Justice Beldam and his colleagues spent two hours tearing Judge Watling's summing-up to shreds. They were surprised that the judge had anticipated the home secretary's intention to abolish the right to silence by warning the jury that they were entitled to draw "adverse inferences" from the brothers' refusal to answer police questions. They were also unimpressed by the judge's denunciation of the brothers —plainly the victims of what the prosecution admitted was an unprovoked racist assault — as racists, and by his failure to direct the jury to take proper account of their clean records. Indeed, he warned that people of good character often turn out to be criminals.

OVERRULED: Judge Watling

The verdict was overturned and the brothers walked free after seven months in prison .

College Note: From 1980-84 Judge Watling was visiting professor in criminal law at the private University of Buckingham, set up by Mrs Thatcher and her admirers to create an educational environment untainted by the common people.

British National Police

THIS charming picture of the inside of a police station showing a recent drugs haul plus guns appeared in the *Sunderland Echo* of 30 April 1993. A recent edition of the racist British National party organ points out that the newspaper posted on the station wall was a copy of a former front page.

"We are proud to see *British Nationalist* is being circulated in police stations," says the organ of the master race. "The BNP regards itself as the foremost party of law and order."

No one would agree more than the party's leader Richard Edmonds, whose most recent contribution to law and order was to instruct one of his faithful followers to "glass" a man outside a pub for the double crime of having a brown skin and walking on the pavement with a white woman. The attack was carried out by Simon Biggs with such savagery that the victim's face, slashed to the jawbone, will be scarred for the rest of his life.

Biggs got four and a half years, his Fuhrer Edmonds a remarkably lenient three months.

SHEPHERD

SIXTH NON-SENSE

■GILLIAN SHEPHERD, the new education secretary, may not share the maniacal obsession of her predecessor, John "Nutter" Patten: to get schools to "opt out".

Unlike "Nutter", she may be impressed by the resistance to opt-outs even in true blue areas. In East Sussex, for instance, not a single school has opted out.

Nutter went to desperate lengths to curb this obstinacy. Last November a group of governors at Claverham Community College, a secondary school in Battle, started a new campaign for an opt-out ballot. They were helped in their campaign by their MP, Charles Wardle, the junior home office minister, who spoke to Nutter in the division lobby about the Claverham ballot and briefed Nutter's special adviser about it on the phone.

Not long afterwards the governors got a "nod and wink" promise from the department that if the school opted out they would get a new sixth form. This promise flouted a decision a few months earlier by Nutter's new pet quango, the Further Education Funding Council, which decided that a sixth form at Claverham was economically and educationally insupportable.

The promise of a sixth form played a crucial part in the campaign for the school to opt out. On polling day all parents got a letter from the opt-out governors announcing that Nutter had approved new sixth forms for seven schools up and down the country, six of which had opted out.

The proposals were opposed by the FEFC, which is stuffed with Tory placepeople. The news of the "magnificent seven" seems to have been leaked to the Claverham governors in advance of the official announcement — just in time for the ballot. But all the leaks and bribes were to no avail. Claverham parents voted two to one against opt-out.

Another county where not a single school has opted out is Oxfordshire, part of which is represented in Parliament by Nutter Patten himself. So distressed is Nutter that he strongly supports the local government commission's recommendation to abolish Oxfordshire county council altogether and replace it with three unwieldy and illogical authorities which would, calculated Nutter, be more favourable to opting out. This change is strongly resisted by another important Oxfordshire MP, Douglas Hurd, foreign secretary, who seems to have more staying power in the cabinet than his emotional former colleague.

PATTEN

Meanwhile at Kings Norton boys school in Birmingham, where parents voted for opt-out earlier this year, generous "honoraria" have been dished out to the top people who worked so hard for the result. Headmaster Ian Sonley, deputy Mike Galliard are to get £1,000 each. Finance director Major Roger Groom is to get a suitable pay rise. The head and his four top colleagues will get free lunches. Parents have not yet been officially told any of this good news, and have therefore not been able to compare it with the school's decision to secure more vital office space by pushing out one of the classes into a hut.

Round and round The Garden

■WHEN Westminster council's planning committee gathered to approve the extravagant plans for the new Royal Opera House there were plenty of objections.

The Civic Trust (letter, 29 June) found the plan "disappointing". The Royal Fine Art Commission (6 May) had three major reservations. The Georgian Group (13 April) was worried about the new buildings proposed for Russell Street. Save British Heritage (5 April) said it was "of paramount importance to prevent a game of grandmother's footsteps in which modest traditional buildings are picked off one by one". The Covent Garden Area Trust (31 March) demanded that the whole plan should be called in by the secretary of state.

English Heritage was less critical and did not use its powers to protect the listed buildings. This came as a profound relief to Vivien Duffield, fundraiser for the Royal Opera House development, member of the board — and cohabitee of Jocelyn Stevens, chairman of English Heritage.

Postman Prat 3

■ POST OFFICE chairman Michael Heron has answered the request from Labour MP Peter Hain for more information about post office business with Lex Service group, a director of which is Bill Cockburn, chief executive of the post office (see *Eye* last three issues).

"As you will appreciate," he writes, "the post office places thousands of contracts at local level and neither I nor Bill nor any other board member would have any way of knowing what these contracts are... I can tell you that no contract with Lex has been entered into centrally (ie by the Board, Executive Committee, Group Purchasing Department) in the past two years. I can also tell you that, contrary to the suggestion in *Private Eye*, Lex has not bid for a contract to run the post office engineering depots in London. As part of the decision-making process on the acquisition of a site for a transport workshop, a subsidiary of Lex, Arlington Motors of Enfield, provided a benchmark against which to compare internal costs."

Royal Mail

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In the City

WITH deckchairs and grey men duly reshuffled and the House of Corruption closed for three months, the Department of Timidity & Inaction (DTI) can take its time about deciding what to do about the inspectors' report into that well timed Anglia TV (director: Lady Archer) share-dealing coup of Lord Archer's mysterious, unidentified friend. The expectation is that an announcement will emerge — more than likely from Archer and his lawyers, confirmed by the DTI — while no embarrassing debates or parliamentary questions can be directed at trade secretary Michael Heseltine.

The betting — and not just from the Archer camp — still remains on no further action. So unless Archer chooses to provide further details about the lucky but strangely silent friend who followed his tip and made £80,000, that may well be all the world will be told. There is no legal provision for Heseltine to publish the inspectors' report.

That would still leave unanswered such questions as the identity of the friend — is it the rumoured Farouk S.? — and of the innocent brokers who handled the transaction. Again a name is rumoured, incorrectly, this time of small firm Charles Stanley, probably just because the firm has an office in Cambridge where the Archers live. Charles Stanley neither confirm nor deny any involvement.

While waiting for the Archer all clear a valuable insight in to the whys and hows of similar DTI investigations into alleged insider trading under section 177 of the financial services act is provided by the 1989-90 testimony from David Durie, head of the DTI's investigation division, to the Commons' trade and industry committee.

Durie was asked in what circumstances external inspectors (as used in the Archer case) were appointed by the DTI? "We will always appoint external inspectors — which is, if you like, the heavy artillery of companies investigation — where there is a serious enough case in front of us which deserves that very heavy handed and very expensive approach," he replied.

How did the DTI decide which cases of alleged insider dealing referred to it by Stock Exchange investigators should be investigated by inspectors? "If there is no outcome or possibility of prosecution or such a low possibility of a prosecution, following the investigation, I think we take the view it is not worth investigating. These things are expensive; typically, they amount to about £100,000," Durie explained. "Those cases where inspectors have been appointed have led to a higher success rate in prosecution."

There are very good reasons for this, according to those with knowledge of section 177 investigations. Witnesses are interviewed under oath and so memories may be more precise given the threat of perjury. Also the DTI tends to go with the inspectors' verdict. If they say the evidence merits prosecution the DTI is likely to press ahead. If the inspectors say there is either no case or a poor case with little chance of conviction, the DTI is most unlikely to ignore that advice.

Durie told the MPs: "I think that if the inspectors were to publish the reports, more names would be blackened than would be cleared very often. Insider dealing is a difficult offence to prove. You can be reasonably certain that it has happened, without being able to prove it. The inspectors may well and quite often *do* come to that conclusion."

Those with knowledge of such investigations say the DTI is always wary of cases where the facts may suggest insider trading but all those involved deny communicating, receiving or using inside information. A number of high profile suspects have avoided prosecution because the inspectors and the DTI took the view that a jury was more likely to believe them than the tale of the transactions. The inspectors know what the defence will be because they are required to put the allegation directly to suspected insider dealers.

Between 1986, when inspectors could first be appointed, and 1994 the Stock Exchange referred 150-160 cases of suspected insider trading to the DTI. These were cases which the Stock Exchange considered disclosed prima facie evidence of insider trading. They included cases involving two government ministers, both of whom escaped further investigation because of the dubious protection afforded by supposed discretionary accounts. The DTI appointed inspectors in some 50 cases. Since 1987 it has prosecuted 25 cases against 44 defendants. It has convicted just 17 of those charged.

Only a handful of the section 177 investigations which did not result in prosecutions have ever been identified by the DTI. So Archer was not a precedent as some conspiracy theorists would suggest. Prior to Archer, four other cases had been acknowledged — AE and Cadbury Schweppes in 1986; Shield Group and Grand Central Investment in 1987; and Peachey Property (re John Ritblat) and Consolidated Gold Fields in 1988.

Durie told MPs there was a clear procedure both for confirming the investigation and its outcome where no prosecution of any identified individual resulted. "We will consult with him or his lawyers about whether anything can be said publicly and there have been one or two cases recently where we have been satisfied there has been sufficient speculation about the possibility of somebody being prosecuted for us to be able to agree with the lawyers that something should be said, not by us but by the individual or his lawyers on his behalf, that we are not intending to conduct a prosecution."

That would seem to be what is now taking place between the DTI and the Archer camp — negotiating the form of words which will allow the man who would be a minister to declare he has been "cleared". As and when such a statement is made the exact wording to which the DTI signs up will need close examination. For the DTI does not always go along. In one needless to say unidentified instance Durie told the MPs the DTI had declined to agree that no wrongdoing had taken place. It restricted itself to confirming the suspect's public announcement that there would be no prosecution.

Doubtless in Archer's case no such lack of cooperation will be necessary given the facts.

PERHAPS keen to repay past favours (loan of car, chauffeur, lovenest) as well as boost his burgeoning private income, sacked minister David Mellor has signed on as a parliamentary consultant to his old musical pal Elliott Bernerd's Chelsfield property group. Exactly what political services Mellor can provide is not immediately clear, but Bernerd is not a man to waste money so there must be a dividend.

HOW TOUCHING to see financial hacks rushing to the defence of John Gunn and others blasted in the DTI's report into the British & Commonwealth/Atlantic Computers collapse and now facing disqualification as directors.

The *Sunday Telegraph* and *Sunday Times* were quick to spring to the aid of Gunn, whose only crime was to be chief executive of B&C when it took over Atlantic and then covered up that it had bought a giant black hole. How unfair that Gunn and colleagues should be stigmatised. How monstrous that their livelihoods should be threatened by disqualification.

B&C shareholders may have lost everything, but the *Telegraph*'s John Jay saw merely a "lack of competence" and called for "a yellow card rather than a red one". The *Telegraph* pointed out how the B&C administrators were backing Gunn. The *Sunset Times*' Jeff Randall was outraged at the treatment of Gunn, who was merely guilty of "poor judgement". It was all "politics". Elsewhere the paper reported how Gunn would be forced to sell his £2.75 million home to fight the ban.

These outpourings of sympathy have nothing to do with past eulogies to the entrepreneurial skills of the same John Gunn. Or to the leaking to the *Sunday Times* (12 June) of somewhat incorrect extracts from a draft of the inspectors' report. In between bringing out the onions for Gunn it was forced to publish a grovelling apology for suggesting in that article that Atlantic's advisers Rothschilds had been censured. The inspectors modified their initial criticisms after Rothschilds' remonstrations. No criticism was made in the final report of Rothschilds' role in floating Atlantic, which the inspectors conclude was a sham. Draft findings are sent to those who DTI inspectors intend to criticise, some of whom might like to divert or share the blame.

'Slicker'

A STORY IS TOLD of Donald, a revered ghillie in years gone by on a certain loch of our acquaintance. It was a bad morning for trout, the water a glassy calm.

Donald toiled all morning at the oars while his cargo of two London businessmen caught nothing.

As lunchtime neared. Donald began to look forward to the lustrous sherry-gold depths of The Macallan Malt Whisky which was the customary reward for a deserving ghillie.But the otiose Sassenachs had other ideas.

"No fish, Donald," they cried. *"Then no whisky!"* Donald said nothing, and ate his lunch at some remove.

But the iron had entered his soul.

The wind rose. And all afternoon while every other boat on the loch was landing an almost miraculous draught of trout, Donald rowed his clients slowly up and down the one unruffled stretch of water.

When evening came, he deposited his fishless clients on the bank, and surveyed them gravely as they rifled through their treasuries of insult, goggling like the trout they had so signally failed to capture.

"Nae Macallan." said Donald at last. *"Nae fish!"* And rowed off into the gloaming.

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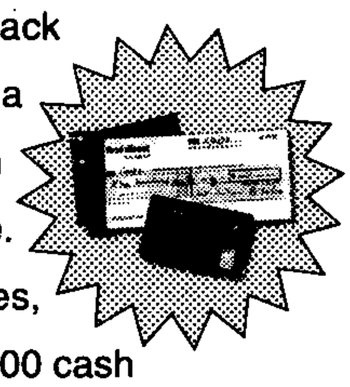

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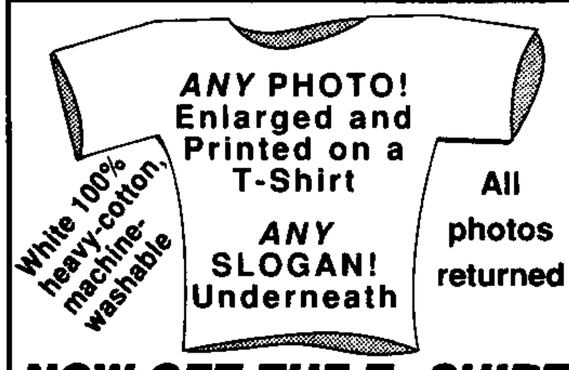
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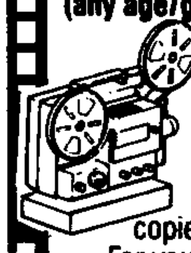

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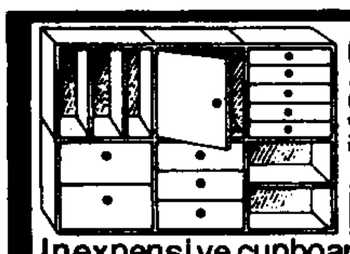

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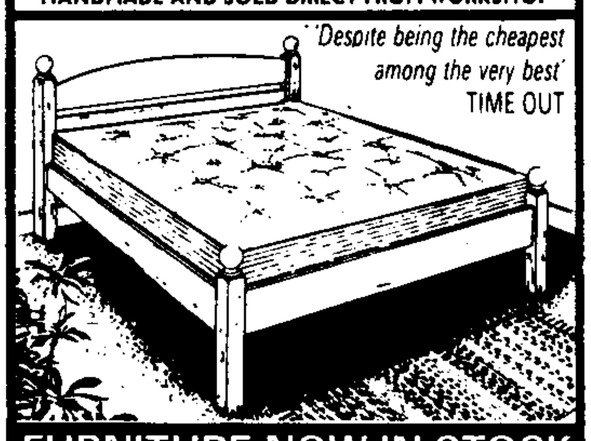

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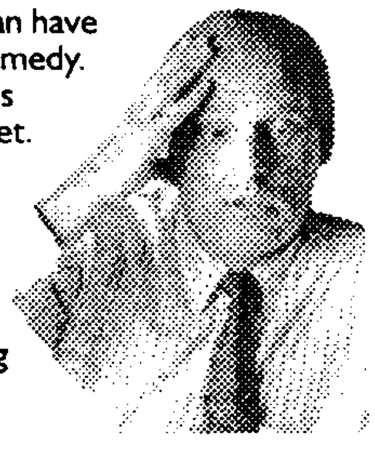

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So did Dr Thorne win last week, when NASA presented images from the Hubble space telescope of the core of galaxy M87 to the public, and said the havoc there could have no other cause than a black hole? No. Dr Hawking ponied up a few years ago. No one in astrophysics has seriously doubted the existence of black holes for a long time. Today's questions are about their number and size.

THE ECONOMIST – 4th June 1994

STEPHEN HAWKING

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